

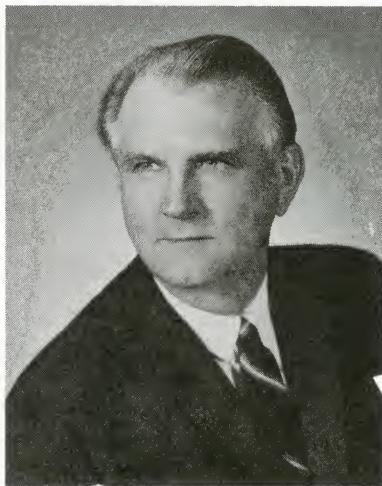
# **FROM THESE ROOTS**

**A HISTORY OF THE  
NORTH ATLANTIC DISTRICT  
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

**Printed, 1975**

**by**

**FORRY AND HACKER  
LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA**



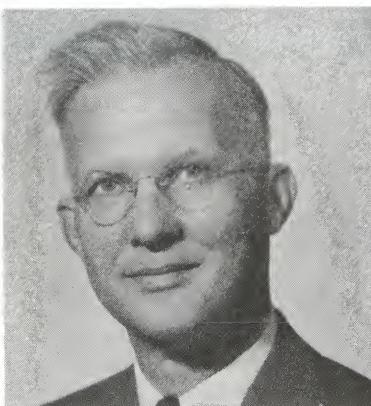
*Elmer Q. Gleim,  
Author*

**AUTHORIZED BY THE ATLANTIC NORTHEAST  
DISTRICT HISTORICAL COMMITTEE**

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### dedication

This volume is dedicated to the faithful men and women who labored to establish the roots of the Church of the Brethren on American soil in the North Atlantic District. By their faithful stewardship, the denomination has become a tree whose branches extend across the nation and into many other continents.

## INTRODUCTION

As there were differences in religious philosophies when Christ walked the earth, so there were differences in Germany where Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses and Alexander Mack, Sr., founded the German Baptist Brethren Church. There were differences among the Brethren of the nineteenth century and among the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in the first decade of the twentieth century. The North Atlantic District, formerly called "Southeastern Pennsylvania, Northern Delaware, New Jersey and Eastern New York," arose out of some of these differences. Carved out of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, it consisted of the geographic area in which the Brethren first set their roots in American soil.

It was in this area that the brotherhood took form, free from the tares of religious oppression and government whimsies. From the roots developed here, branches have fanned across the continent—east to west and south to north.

It is the purpose of this volume to acquaint the reader, in the light of a background of more than two and a half centuries, with the factors which contributed to the formation of the North Atlantic District; some of the activities of its sixty-year existence; and the main reasons for the reunion of the two districts. This is the only single volume covering the entire sixty-year (1911-1971) history of the North Atlantic District.

Found in these pages are some insights into problems facing urban churches whose governing councils were largely non-urban in nature. Although much of the area included in the North Atlantic District at the time of its origin was considered to be rural, the economic, social and cultural radii pointed toward Philadelphia as the center. Thus it was to the nurturing of urban interests that the North Atlantic District directed its activities. Of importance in this volume are the accounts of activities of early Brethren settlers, the founding of each of the churches of the Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Eastern New York and Northern Delaware, and the subsequent life of these congregations within the socio-economic influences surrounding them.

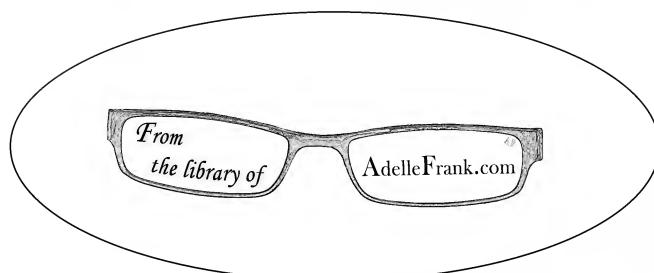
Soon after the reunion of the two districts had been accomplished, the board of the new Atlantic Northeast District appointed an Historical Committee and directed it to proceed with the production of a history of the former North Atlantic District. The district board provided wise

counsel to the committee and has been fully supportive of its efforts throughout. The district executive, Harold Z. Bomberger, provided outstanding service to the committee in the capacity of advisor and member ex-officio.

We commend the editor, Elmer Q. Gleim, for his painstaking efforts in researching available resources, and for his efficiency in writing and editing the script.

We look upon this volume as the instrument that imprints the seal on the reuniting of the Eastern and North Atlantic Districts. "Our roots are in the past, but our eyes are on the future." We hope that it will be the means of recalling our faith and that it may help us to understand better the traditions that have developed through that faith. It gives evidence of our unity in the endeavor of the Atlantic Northeast District to seek for the fullest growth of Christ's Kingdom.

The Historical Committee



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*From These Roots* is a cooperative effort between the editor, the Historical Committee and many congregational representatives as they tried to achieve a reasonably accurate historical work. Each member of the Historical Committee, whose picture appears at the beginning of the volume, has contributed valuable suggestions and substance to make this a readable history. Harold Z. Bomberger, acting in *ex officio* capacity, spent many hours refining and clarifying many portions of the original manuscript.

Each congregation was given the opportunity to read and edit its own history in order to insure accuracy and integrity. These histories are surveys meant to give some appreciation of the distinctive lifestyle of each church group within the North Atlantic District.

In addition, the editor owes much to members of his own family for the assistance they gave in producing a volume which was first authorized in the closing months of 1973. Dianne L. Bowders, the daughter, prepared many of the pen sketches which appear in this work. Ruth Rishel Gleim spent many hours in reading the manuscript before it was given to the printer and assisted in indexing the volume.

Most of the pictures have come from individuals residing in the North Atlantic District. A few have come from the Heritage Room of the Elizabethtown College Library. An attempt has been made to show the leaders, past and present, who helped to make the North Atlantic District so unique.

Elmer Q. Gleim

May, 1975

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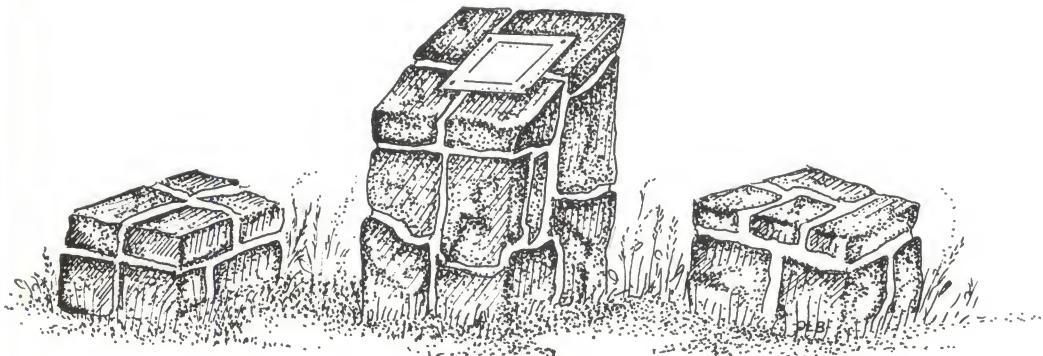
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Peter Becker Memorial Home  
Klein Meetinghouse and Peter Becker Marker  
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Esther E. Kreps  
H. Stover Kulp  
John B. Grimley  
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Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### FROM THESE ROOTS



*WISSAHICKON MARKER*

The stamp of William Penn's genius has marked Pennsylvania life for many generations. To this proprietor, with his humanitarian and democratic philosophy, Pennsylvania owes the unique patterns of life which have persisted to the present time. His progressive ideas concerning Christian brotherhood and international cooperation laid the foundations for the complex cultural patterns of the state. His emphasis on a colony based on craftsmanship and industry attracted skilled workers from all parts of Europe. Penn's interest in the soil created a state with dominant agricultural interests and his concern for trade and commerce transformed Philadelphia from a "greene countrie towne" into a flourishing metropolis in a brief span of years.

Many of the original members of the Church of the Brethren became heirs of Penn's unique legacies. Arriving in Philadelphia as part of the Great German Migration (1714-1775), they were attracted by Penn's liberal land policies, his guarantee of religious freedom and the freedom to preserve their own culture unmolested. Original members of the brotherhood chose to settle in or close to Germantown, Pennsylvania. Here they lived for some years with other Germans of Pietist extraction, all of whom desired to "maintain a separate little province and thus feel secure from all oppression".<sup>1</sup>

Members of the Church of the Brethren, like scores of other groups which converged on America, were offspring of the Enlightenment. This eighteenth century movement released people from the shackles of their past and set their minds to questioning. Old institutions tumbled and new ones were born during this period. Alexander Mack, Sr. (1679-1735), the founder of the new religious brotherhood, has been recognized as one of the leaders of the German Enlightenment. The upsurge of humanity's spirit began to express itself in scores of new forms. Underlying man's discoveries and writings in science and

religion was an insistence that humanity must be permitted to act according to the dictates of its own conscience. Protestantism, with its profusion of sectarian forms, was the religious expression of this new spirit of self-assertion.

The earliest members of the Church of the Brethren were a part of this upsurge. They fled from Germany in order to improve their life economically and to guarantee the survival of their new-found faith. Centuries before 1719, conditions within the German nation formed a centrifuge, dispersing many people into other lands. The unique attractions of Pennsylvania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries drew the good and the oppressed from many parts of Europe. The Germans who came brought with them ideals of industry, persistence, thoughtfulness and self-consciousness. Many of these early settlers created societies which stressed self-sufficiency. Others looked to their new communities as havens of refuge from an evil world.

### A Transplanted Church

The rootage of the Church of the Brethren was in various European religious movements. These included Anabaptism, Calvinism, Pietism and the Brothers Movements of earlier centuries.<sup>2</sup> From the beginning, Brethren placed considerable emphasis on the sense of community, practical faith, balanced life which avoids extremism, mission awareness which encompassed the world and a questing spirit which avoided dogmatic statements. Looking at these qualities from the perspective of the twentieth century, these were the "seeds of time" which grew.<sup>3</sup>

In less than a quarter of a century (1708-1733), the new-found brotherhood was torn from the soils of the Rhine River Palatinate and transplanted to the soils of southeastern Pennsylvania. Peter Becker (1687-1758) was a member a brief five years before he was forced to leave his native Germany for Penn's Commonwealth. Alexander Mack, Jr. (1712-1803), another early American leader of the brotherhood, was a member of the church less than a year before he set sail with his father for Germantown, Pennsylvania. Alexander Mack, Sr., the founder of the church, remained in Germany twenty-one years before he resettled in Pennsylvania. The Church of the Brethren soon found itself in a nation of immigrants.

William Penn's vision of a commonwealth, where "plain and well-intending people" could worship and live out their lives according to their own plans, provided the proper climate for growth. Many kinds of people settled in this new land and each tried to contribute his own gift to the growing commonwealth. Attracted by Penn's advertisements of a rich land with guaranteed religious liberties, the Church of the Brethren took root adjacent to other sectarian people. In the section of Pennsylvania where many of the ideals of the nation took form the Church of the Brethren took root and expanded across the nation.

For many of the colonial years, American religious groups were frequently extensions of European churches. They looked to their

native lands for educated leadership and financial support. Members of the Church of the Brethren, however, very soon lost all organizational ties with their native Germany. As shiploads of passengers arrived in America, the strength of the church was transferred to the southeastern section of Pennsylvania. For a number of decades, the primary growth of the brotherhood was made possible by the stream of immigrants who arrived through the port of Philadelphia.

The early Brethren could not entirely escape the transitional crises common to most immigrants. There were the problems of establishing roots in a new land. There were cultural conflicts occasioned by differences in language, custom and religious belief. Benjamin Franklin once expressed his concern that this great mass of new immigrants would "Germanize us instead of our Anglicizing them".<sup>4</sup> Martin G. Brumbaugh, surveying nearly two centuries of denominational history, explained that "our church flourished best among people of German descent...Services were held in the German language and hence no appreciable gain was made among people of other tongues".<sup>5</sup>

### A Center For The Expanding Church

The taproot of the Church of the Brethren was put down in the Philadelphia area. Until the time of the American Revolution, the chief congregations of the brotherhood were concentrated within a sixty mile radius of the great city of the new world. The first German settlements were enclaves surrounded by English-speaking communities. The Brethren settled in the river valleys close to Philadelphia in regions where the Germanic strain was dominant. In New Jersey, one of the charming and extensive agricultural districts was known as German Valley for many years. The Brethren gradually moved from Germantown into the Delaware and Schuylkill River valleys and into Lancaster and Berks counties. By the beginnings of the American Revolution, the church expanded into Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia.

The contacts of the first Brethren were limited primarily to Mennonites, Moravians and the Society of Friends. A common Anabaptist and Pietist rootage fostered this early kinship. The Quakers, like the Brethren, were seekers for the truth. As decades passed, both the Quakers and the Brethren began to stress their "peculiar people" doctrines. They turned from the city and pursued the rural life. The real strength of the Mennonites, the Quakers and the Brethren in the colonial period lay in their rural meetings.<sup>6</sup> All of these religious groups turned aside from the developing luxuries and cultural changes of metropolitan Philadelphia.

The thriving port of Philadelphia became the principal gateway to the new world for many German immigrants. Penn's land policies encouraged rapid settlement in the river valleys close to the city. In the earliest period of the country's beginnings, people moved in groups. They settled in communities and gave America its regional peculiarities

and ethnic characteristics. The Pennsylvania Germans settled in communities where they could maintain their family ties and religious loyalties. These provided the basis for a cooperative economy and helped the settlers to maintain their morale.

The North Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren played a significant role in the spread of the brotherhood to other sections of the United States. Many German people, eager for land ownership, were lured by Penn's advertisements into Pennsylvania. His policy of granting 500 to 1,000 acres of farmland contributed to the growth of the single family farm in the commonwealth. The rapid influx of Germans from Württemburg, Zweibrucken, Mannheim, the Palatinate and other German states soon created a scarcity of good land in the eastern parts of the colony. As the price of land inflated, the newcomer was forced to look to the frontier for cheaper land. In 1750, for example, farm land in the eastern portions of Pennsylvania was selling for \$15 to \$25 per acre. A farm with good buildings close to Philadelphia sold for as much as \$50 per acre. As the pressure of population mounted, land prices in eastern Pennsylvania continued to climb.

Many members of the Church of the Brethren, in search of good land and stable community life, stopped first at Germantown, Coventry or Amwell before moving on to new locations. The church spread across the eastern portions of the United States much like the locust groves which mark the countrysides. Many country lanes and limestone "breaks" are characterized by flourishing locust groves. It is the peculiar characteristic of the locust not only to grow from scattered seeds but to spring from the roots of original stock. The Church of the Brethren grew in much the same fashion, springing from the roots which were first implanted in the Philadelphia area. From here groves of new settlements spread across the nation.

Up until 1770, Germantown was the center of the brotherhood's activities. Many elders of the Church of the Brethren were ordained to the ministry at the Germantown Church. The Germantown leaders were active in establishing new churches in sections beyond the city. The Indian Creek territory, for example, was one of the sections to which members of the Germantown Church gave early attention. After the death of his wife in Germantown in 1746, Elder Peter Becker moved to Indian Creek to live with his daughter, Mary Harley. While the Indian Creek congregation was not organized as a separate congregation until 1785, members of the brotherhood lived in the region earlier. When Peter Becker died on March 19, 1758, he was buried in the Klein cemetery within the bounds of the Indian Creek congregation.

About 1750, scores of German-speaking people were moving from Pennsylvania into Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. A scarcity of good land constrained Richard Peters, land agent for the Penns, to insist that "a new purchase of land is absolutely necessary" (1752). This new purchase, finalized at the Albany Conference (1754), brought western Pennsylvania lands into the Commonwealth. Among the

families in western Pennsylvania who can trace their ancestries to Germantown and to Germany are Mocks (Macks), Ankrums, Ganszes (Gans), Holsingers, Holsoppes Horsts, Leckrones, Lehmans, Longaneckers, Mosers, Replogles and Rowsers.<sup>7</sup>

One of the early families of the brotherhood was named Buechle. Michael Buechle, a German Amishman, came from his native land in 1754 and united with the Church of the Brethren at Germantown. While he was residing in Germantown he met and married Barro Luken. The newly-married couple moved on to Somerset County, Pennsylvania (1777), where Bro. Buechle was advanced to the eldership in the Church of the Brethren (1785). From this single family have come such familiar family names in the brotherhood as Beeghly, Beachley, Beughley and Beckley.<sup>8</sup>

Before the Revolutionary War, the brotherhood spread gradually into the lands which were acquired from the Indians. Brethren were active in promoting church expansion by evangelism and migration. Peter Becker was instrumental in founding the Coventry, Conestoga and Oley congregations. William Stober (Stover) came to America from Switzerland and settled at Germantown briefly in 1752. He moved on to the Antietam congregation where he joined John Mack and John Price in promoting the work of this congregation in the Southern District of Pennsylvania. William Stober was the grandfather of Wilbur Brenner Stover (1864-1930), the pioneer missionary of the Church of the Brethren.

Daniel Leatherman, who came to America in 1730, was ordained to the ministry at Germantown by Alexander Mack, Sr. He organized the Black Rock congregation in Southern Pennsylvania (1738) and was active in the Beaver Dam and Middletown Valley congregations of Maryland prior to the Revolutionary War.

The Pipe Creek congregation of Maryland was organized in 1751. Members of the brotherhood were residing in this area at an earlier date. Andrew Wolf, and his wife, Mary Urner Wolf, of the Coventry congregation, lived in the Pipe Creek congregation as early as 1742.<sup>9</sup> Jonas Urner (1772-1813), the son of Martin Urner II, ministered to the Pipe Creek membership from 1811 to 1813.<sup>10</sup> He was a former minister of the Coventry congregation. George Adam Martin, Also a member of the Coventry congregation, founded a church at Brothers Valley in Somerset County (1762) in Western Pennsylvania.

George Klein (1715-1783), who was baptized at the Amwell Church in 1739, moved to Berks County, Pennsylvania, where he was active in organizing the Northkill (Maiden Creek) congregation and the Little Swatara Church (1757). At the beginning of the Revolutionary War (1772), Wendell Baker (Becker) moved into Union County, Pennsylvania, to lay the foundations of the Buffalo congregation in the Southern District of Pennsylvania. He was an immigrant from Pultz, Germany, and came to Philadelphia on September 27, 1749. He resided for a period of time within the bounds of the Amwell congregation where he united with the Church of the Brethren.

During the colonial period, the emergence of state arrogance compelled Brethren to move from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania into Maryland and Virginia. On June 13, 1777, the Pennsylvania Council passed an ordinance requiring all citizens to revoke their allegiance to George III, the English king, and to transfer it by oath to the state. The loyalty of the Brethren to their Anabaptist and their Pietist heritage brought them once more into conflict with the state during the era of rebellion against England. The Brethren not only objected to the taking of oaths but objected to war. The Pennsylvania Council and the Continental Congress showed respectful tolerance for the peace convictions of the sectarian groups. This leniency to religious dissenters brought forth objections from other residents. Some Brethren were among the first to migrate to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Those who remained in Pennsylvania faced stern resistance and were roughly treated by both tories and patriots.

Where *The World* crowded them, the Brethren moved to other areas. They were a conscientious people who refused to swear oaths, hold civil offices, do military service or adopt the prevailing customs. They searched for a life of peace and plenty in the rich agricultural valleys of the nation. Their idea of profit was not the making of money but nature's increase. They wanted two blades of grass to grow where only one had grown before they came. They were as faithful in the cultivation of their religion as they were in cultivating their lands. Frederick Denton Dove described the Brethren in these words,

“. . . their manner of dress, their family life, their business ethics and their social attitudes have woven cultural patterns which are strangely their own, and have brought upon these people both the severest persecution and the highest commendation.”<sup>11</sup>

Following the Revolution, Brethren began to migrate into the western portions of Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley. The first national census (1790) showed heavy concentrations of German people in Bedford, Fayette, Somerset and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania. The Brethren, with 1,500 members in 1790, used the colonization method of missionary expansion and growth. They continued to expand into new areas by groups and maintained settlements reasonably close to their cultural center in Eastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania.<sup>12</sup> Scores of ardent missionary-minded Brethren preachers helped the church to establish itself in lands both east and west of the Mississippi River. Among those from the North Atlantic District were Martin Urner II (1725-1799) and John H. Umstad (1802-1873).

Many members in the scattered regions of the brotherhood look to the southeastern portions of Pennsylvania for their family roots. The original members of the Germantown Church bore such names as Baker, Trout, Cook (Koch), Gans (Gauntz), Price, Holtzapple and Hildebrand. These family names are still to be found in many congregations of the brotherhood. The Prices, Harleys, Kulps,

Landises, Freeds, Alderfers, Nyces, Clemmers, Rineharts and Cassels not only continue to reside within the district but have relatives in many states throughout the nation.

### The District's Historical Legacies

The North Atlantic District stands at the center of the nation's historical beginnings. The 160-mile long Liberty Trail winds close to many of the shrines which are important to the Brethren. Here are to be found the oldest meetinghouses of the brotherhood, the stream of the first baptisms in America, the Christopher Sower properties, the site of the first Annual Meeting and the numerous cemeteries containing the remains of the original founders of the brotherhood. The papers, magazines and books which originated in the district have become an important part of the heritage of the church.

Perhaps more significant than the tangible memorials of the church's beginnings are the intangible legacies of faith and practice given to the church by its founders. The ordinances of brotherliness, reinstated in Germantown on Christmas Day, 1723, have given the church a collective spirit which has been strong in fostering community life. The ethical sense, so strongly tied to the Anabaptist heritage, has given the church membership an unusually strong sense of personal integrity. Members of the modern church share with early members a Calvinistic devotion to hard work and a zest to get things done. The Pietistic reserve and quietness of manner have become a part of the church's heritage.

The Church of the Brethren was born in an atmosphere of seeking the truth. Moderator H.C. Early, at the Bicentennial Conference of Des Moines, Iowa (1908), stressed the "truth-seeking and truth-witnessing" qualities of the denomination's beginnings.<sup>13</sup> The original members of the brotherhood dedicated themselves to inquiry and examination. In this sense, they committed themselves to the root meaning of the word *history*. Alexander Mack, Sr., searching for a religious faith in a shattered religious world, read as widely as he could from the New Testament and from Apostolic history. Martin G. Brumbaugh claimed that Mack knew "the history of the church from the Apostolic age to his own time".<sup>14</sup> Floyd E. Mallott, former professor of Church History at Bethany Theological Seminary, showed that the early Brethren were influenced by the writings of Gottfried Arnold who developed the historical method of research in church history.<sup>15</sup>

One of the very early copyists and public clerks in Pennsylvania belonged to the Germantown Church. He was Christian Lehman (1713-1774), a pioneer historian, scrivener and notary public. In the years preceding the American Revolution, he surveyed properties, prepared deeds of transfer, wrote wills and conducted all manner of business transactions which required careful penmanship. His tombstone contains the inscription, "notary public of this province". He served as the secretary of Germantown's first public library in the

1740s. At his death on December 28, 1774, he was buried by members of the Germantown Church in the Upper Germantown Burying Grounds.<sup>16</sup>

About the time Pennsylvania's early historian, Morgan Edwards (1722-1795), was writing about the Baptist groups of America, Alexander Mack, Jr., was creating the earliest history of the Brethren in America. The elder of the Germantown congregation gathered information from the papers of his father and Peter Becker to preserve the history of the brotherhood's beginnings. This concise statement was completed in 1774 and was intended to help young people with their decisions during the difficult years of the American Revolution. He entitled the work, *Introduction to The Writings of Alexander Mack* and included it in the second edition of Mack's celebrated booklet, *A Brief and Simple Exposition of the Outward But Still Sacred Rites and Ordinances of the House of God*.

The shock of the American Revolution fostered the tendency of the Brethren to withdraw from *The World*. They halted their vigorous literary activities and developed an outspoken anti-literary and anti-educational sentiment in the nineteenth century. When a strong sentiment developed for the creation of a distinctly American culture, the German people became aware of the threat to their religion and their language. They responded by withdrawal from society and by insisting on the retention of their German language. By 1789, exclusive, tight-knit groups were so conspicuous in the church that the Annual Conference issued warnings concerning the marrying of cousins or other near relatives.

By the close of the nineteenth century, the denomination began to emerge from its isolation and turned again to history in support of its faith and practices. The full accounts of the Annual Meetings show that the Brethren relied upon standard historical works to cite the early church in support of its beliefs. *The Gospel Messenger* at the beginning of the twentieth century contained frequent references to the Waldensians. There were also occasional references to the celebrated *History of the Primitive Christians* by Gottfried Arnold. The Church of the Brethren from its beginnings has maintained a deep rootage in the historic Christian faith.

When non-Brethren writers began to publish written accounts of the denomination, they often confused the Church of the Brethren with the Ephrata Movement and misrepresented other facets of the church's life. As early as March, 1856, Henry Kurtz used the *Gospel Visitor* to defend the church against such historical misrepresentations. When Martin Grove Brumbaugh wrote his classic volume, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (1899), he was sensitive to the misunderstandings which existed about the denomination.

The Annual Conference of 1895 gave permission for the publication of a history of the brotherhood. Almost immediately there was a flowering of literature dealing with the Brethren. A number of scholarly men, many of them from the Eastern and North Atlantic districts, began to research the church's records in Germany and in America.

These students were leaders in the field of church history during a period in which the denomination was suffering from cultural lag. Some members objected to having their pictures placed in a book. Others objected to the custom of eulogizing Brethren. When Martin G. Brumbaugh was researching his volume, he lamented that no member of the denomination, except Abraham H. Cassel, aided him with the work in spite of his repeated appeals for assistance.<sup>17</sup>

Martin Grove Brumbaugh (1862-1930) wrote an early history of the denomination from sources he gathered in Germany and from the vast collection of materials in the library of Abraham H. Cassel (1820-1908). Bro. Cassel was a native of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. He was a great, great grandson of Christopher Saur through his mother, Polly Harley. His mother was also a granddaughter of Peter Becker. His interest in tracing his own ancestry encouraged in him a lively interest in historical records. Bro. Cassel once wrote, "I have travelled thousands of miles and ransacked old Bee Boxes and Flour Barrels in the garrets and lofts and have therefore amassed an amount of matter which is almost incredible."

The material he amassed amounted to nearly fifty thousand books, pamphlets and broadsides. Many famous people came to visit his library along the Indian Creek. Governors Pennypacker and Brumbaugh were among those who visited regularly. When the Norristown borough celebrated its centennial in 1883, Abraham Harley Cassel was in an honored place in the first carriage of the parade. Much of the material he gathered has been given permanent housing in the L. A. Beeghly Library at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia has also received some of his collection.

Charles C. Ellis saw in this remarkable man the kind of ideal which American history books have extolled. He said,

"In the days when our interest in education has been suffered to lapse, we have at least one striking proof of ability in the experience of Abraham H. Cassel, whose story ought to be pondered well by every parent in our brotherhood. Selling herbs to buy candles and books and matches, in a day when matches cost twenty-five cents a box, literally fighting his way into superior recognition as a scholar and an antiquarian, his Lincoln-like story ought to be an inspiration to every boy of our people and an admonition to every parent."<sup>18</sup>

In a time when members of the Church of the Brethren were indifferent to their own history, the story of the church was being engraved and preserved on the shelves of Cassel's library. Other local Brethren, inspired by Bro. Cassel's devotion, were soon consumed with interest in historical research. One of these was Jay Gottwals Francis (1870-1958). A native of Chester County, Pennsylvania, he was the son of John Umstad and Mary Gottwals Francis of Oaks. He was the great, great grandson of Captain Arnold Francis of the Revolutionary War. His father served in the Civil War. Jacob Z. Gottwals, his maternal

grandfather and long-time elder of the Green Tree congregation, exerted a strong influence on his life. Very early in his experience he developed an interest in history and the keeping of genealogical records.<sup>19</sup>

J. G. Francis struggled for many years to achieve recognition for the Brethren Historical Society. In 1898, a German Baptist Brethren Historical Association was formed at Germantown, Pennsylvania, "to collect, preserve and diffuse the history of our church." Although an appeal was made at an early date to incorporate this association into the general church body, the Annual Conference was reluctant to approve the request. The conference acknowledged the value of church documents and urged congregations and individuals to take steps to preserve them (1900).

The Brethren Historical Association kept alive the zeal for preserving historical records. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the organization was served by the following officers: M. C. Swigart, president; F. F. Holsopple, secretary, and W. S. Price, treasurer. An executive committee consisted of J. G. Francis, chairman, Lawrence Ruble, John S. Flory, Harry H. Nye, J. J. Scrogum and Wilbur B. Stover. Meetings of the association were held in the North Atlantic District and at the brotherhood level during Annual Conference. Martin G. Brumbaugh became the chairman of the executive committee a decade before his death and labored earnestly for the full recognition of the society.

Recognition came finally in 1945 when a committee of five members was appointed by the Annual Conference. The new Historical Committee became the successor to the Historical Commission which was appointed in 1938. The first members of the new brotherhood committee were L. W. Shultz, H. A. Brandt, J. E. Miller, Floyd E. Mallott and B. F. Waltz. As part of its service to the brotherhood, the committee developed two historical depositories: one was located at Elgin, Illinois and the other was in the Germantown Church. In 1947, J. G. Francis contributed a valuable collection of bound materials to the Germantown Church depository. During this period of renewed interest in historical collections, the colleges of the brotherhood were encouraged to improve their Brethren archives. By 1950, the Historical Library at Elgin, Illinois, began to adopt standard organizational features.

Another historian of the North Atlantic District was George N. Falkenstein (1859-1949). As pastor of the Germantown Church in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, his interest in gathering historical records grew. At the request of the Pennsylvania German Society, he published a series of articles concerning the Church of the Brethren in the Society's *Annual* (1900). These chapters were reprinted in book form under the title, *History of the German Baptist Brethren* (1901). The chapters gave a good account of the early history of the Germantown Church.

These district and brotherhood leaders helped to foster within the

church an awareness of denominational history. Their writings and oratorical skills laid the foundations on which later Brethren have built. Abraham H. Cassell, J. G. Francis, George N. Falkenstein and Martin G. Brumbaugh gave a new stature to church history within the denomination. When Bro. Brumbaugh died in 1930, the General Education Board of the Church of the Brethren memorialized him by saying, "He inspired on the part of the church an undying interest in the founders and early traditions of our faith."<sup>20</sup>

The North Atlantic District has benefitted by its location in an area where many Brethren have pursued scholarly research. Strong leaders of the denomination have used the universities and seminaries of the Philadelphia and New York areas to advance their formal education. For forty years, many Brethren pastors selected Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, because of its leadership in historical research.

Prominent among those who have used the district for historical research are George N. Falkenstein, Martin G. Brumbaugh, D.W. Kurtz, C.C. Ellis, Paul H. Bowman, Sr., J.G. Francis, Floyd E. Mallott, Frederick Denton Dove, Rufus D. Bowman and Donald F. Durnbaugh. The collections of Abraham H. Cassell, the libraries of the Germantown Historical Society and the Pennsylvania Historical Society have attracted many scholars who have researched the denomination's beginnings. The old cemeteries at Amwell, Germantown, Franconia and the Harley burying-ground have assisted scholars in tracing Brethren genealogies.<sup>21</sup>

When Rufus D. Bowman researched his doctoral dissertation on "An Historical and Interpretative Study of the Church of the Brethren and War" (1944), he relied heavily on the Christopher Saur publications. With the assistance of a German refugee professor from Berlin, Frank F. Fliess, he translated many works hitherto unknown to the Brethren for use in the volume. The writing, later published under the title of *The Church of the Brethren and War*, has become a classic of Brethren writing.

### **A Center For Historical Observances**

The North Atlantic District was among the leaders in seeking for an appropriate bicentennial celebration for the denomination. In 1905, the Philadelphia First Church was one of several congregations requesting a committee to formulate plans for appropriate observances in 1908. The conference was receptive to the suggestion "to remember the days of old" (Deuteronomy 32:7), but many congregations objected to a committee which might impose its will on the local churches. In 1907, the Germantown Church was one of four congregations requesting a bicentennial celebration in 1908. The conference responded favorably and appointed a bicentennial committee consisting of George N. Falkenstein, I.N.H. Beahm, M. G. Brumbaugh, S. N. McCann and D.L. Miller. The observance was celebrated at the Des Moines, Iowa, Annual Conference. The addresses were compiled in book form and

printed under the title, *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren* (1908).

The denomination's interest in church history grew rather rapidly in the early decades of the twentieth century. Leaders of the church began to appreciate the unifying nature of the heritage given to the Brethren through Alexander Mack, Sr., Peter Becker and Alexander Mack, Jr. In 1918, a query before the Annual Conference requested the printing of a volume on the facts, beliefs and doctrines of the original Church of the Brethren. For a period of decisive change, the brotherhood recognized the necessity for the membership to be taught the truth concerning "the revival of Apostolic Christianity by Alexander Mack and his seven associates at Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708."<sup>22</sup> Again, in 1919, the Annual Conference called for a return to the doctrines and teachings of the early church leaders because they have been "potent in giving solidarity and unity to our church."<sup>23</sup>

The favored relationship of it to the founding fathers has encouraged all Brethren to look to the district for the roots of their faith. Bicentennial observances of the arrival of the Brethren (1919), of the beginnings of the Germantown Church (1923) and of the work of the Sowers (1938) have been observed within the district. In 1943, members of the Church of the Brethren, the Old German Baptist Brethren and the Brethren met together at the McPherson Annual Conference for the first time since their separation. They were observing the 200th anniversary of the printing of the first German Bible on the Sower Press.

The Germantown Church was host to the brotherhood at the beginning of the 250th year of the denomination. An anniversary year was instituted in order

"to confront and challenge our Brethren people with our priceless religious heritage in such a manner as to quicken our sensitivity to the will of God and to encourage complete and continuous dedication among our people to the course of peace, justice, truth and right."<sup>24</sup>

It was the Germantown Church which initiated the action to erect a suitable marker at Schwarzenau, Germany, to commemorate the 250th anniversary year of the denomination's beginnings. This marker was erected in August, 1958 and was unveiled in association with the World Convention of Brethren in Kassel and Schwarzenau. Some Brethren from the district were present at the unveiling of the marker.

### **The Writing of District Histories**

The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the writing of district histories. A small volume was prepared for *Southern Illinois* (1907) by J. S. Snyder and several other writers. Another early history was prepared under the title of, *A History of the Brethren in Virginia* (1908) by D. H. Zigler.

The first record of the churches of the North Atlantic District appeared in the volume, *History of the Church of the Brethren of The Eastern District of Pennsylvania* (1915). The inspiration for this large volume came from an address delivered by George N. Falkenstein in the Mohler's Church near Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1908. When he spoke on the theme, "A Brief History of the Lancaster County Churches", Bro. Falkenstein aroused widespread interest in the creation of a complete history of the forty-nine churches and missions of Eastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania. A committee to undertake this work was formed in 1911 and the work was published four years later. Many elders and ministers of the North Atlantic District contributed to this important work.

During this period new interest was generated in preserving congregational records. The earliest history of a congregation in the North Atlantic District was prepared by Isaac N. Urner under the title, *History of the Coventry Brethren Church in Chester County* (1898). Other congregational histories of the district have been written for anniversary occasions. One of the monumental volumes deals with the unusual records of the Philadelphia First Church, written by Roland L. Howe under the title, *The History of A Church* (1943). J. G. Francis composed a small booklet entitled, "One Hundred Years of the Green Tree Church of the Brethren, 1845-1945".

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, district leaders have been cognizant of the need to preserve items of historical value. After 1945, district historical committees began to pursue in earnest the work begun by the original Brethren Historical Association. When a new district constitution was adopted in 1951 at the Quakertown district conference, a committee of three was appointed to classify and preserve records of the churches, "especially those of the Germantown, Coventry and Amwell churches." These district committees have been composed of Irwin S. Hoffer, W. G. Nyce, John C. Detra, Ira Holsopple, William I. Book, B. F. Waltz, Paul R. Austin, Lucille Wise, Kathryn Oller and Elaine Bendinelli.

These district committees have cooperated with the brotherhood historical committees in creating inventories of valuable historical artifacts. On Sunday, July 20, 1969, members of the district Historical Committee worshipped with the members of the Amwell Church. In the afternoon, the committee observed the various records and documents in possession of the Amwell Church. The district committee was informed that the original sheepskin deed to the church property with the signature of John Naas is owned by the congregation. The membership also controls *Manuscript Minutes* dating from the 1830s. In order to encourage all district churches to care for their historical records, a Workshop for the Preservation of Historical Records met in the Ambler Church of the Brethren (October 20, 1969).

Before the North Atlantic District merged with the Eastern District to form the Atlantic Northeast District, the Historical Committee began to promote plans to develop an interpretative history of the churches

of the New York and Philadelphia areas. Virginia S. Fisher, the Associate Executive Secretary for the Tri-District, was active in promoting a plan for the writing of the history. The new history was projected to reflect trends, forces and movements of the district in the period from 1911 to 1970.

On July 28, 1973, the Historical Committee of the new Atlantic Northeast District engaged Elmer Q. Gleim to proceed with the creation of an interpretative history. The present volume, *From These Roots*, is the work of the editor with the assistance of members of the History Committee. The committee consists of Ralph E. Kreps, chairman, D. Howard Keiper, secretary, Caleb W. Bucher, Anna Carper and Helen Davis. Harold Z. Bomberger, the district executive, has given valuable assistance both to the committee and to the editor as an ex-officio member.

Many materials used in the creation of this volume are preserved in the valuable Brethren Heritage Room located at Elizabethtown College. This college library has been designated the official repository for historical documents for the Atlantic Northeast District.

### **An Urban-Oriented District**

The North Atlantic District is part of a section of the United States which is dominated by metropolitan life. In 1911, when the district was formed, its churches and people were influenced by New York and Philadelphia, two of America's largest cities.<sup>25</sup> In its American beginnings members of the Church of the Brethren were influenced by the developing commercial and capitalistic life of Philadelphia. The Germantown Church was close enough to be concerned about the threat of the city to its own cultural life.<sup>26</sup> The first urban congregation of the brotherhood was formed from membership which had become part of Philadelphia's industrial and business life.<sup>27</sup>

As a denomination, the Church of the Brethren was able to escape the cultural impact of the city so long as it maintained its isolation. Restrictive church policies helped to preserve this cultural isolation of the Brethren during a part of the nineteenth century. As long as the nation remained predominantly rural in nature, the Church of the Brethren maintained a religious outlook which was markedly rural in quality. When the time came that the nation could no longer care for its rapid population growth by expansion into new areas, it began to pyramid its population in areas which were already densely populated, creating an increasing urban density. One of the areas affected by this change was the North Atlantic District.

The interest of the Church of the Brethren in the city developed slowly. City mission work was first approved by the Annual Conference of 1895. The General Missionary and Tract Committee of the denomination gave financial assistance to the Germantown Church which was so small that it was regarded as a mission in the 1890s. The average church attendance in Germantown in 1895-1896 was

twenty-one persons. District Mission Boards were encouraged to begin work in cities "where there are favorable openings." In spite of this encouragement, many congregations of the brotherhood remained indifferent in their support of urban work. Even before conference approval had been granted for city mission work, the Coventry congregation was seeking to develop a church in Pottstown (1888) and the Philadelphia First Church was engaged in mission work in the form of Sunday Schools at several locations in Philadelphia (1877, 1883).<sup>28</sup>

The reluctance of the brotherhood to undertake mission work in the cities was due to its rural heritage. As late as 1901, *The Gospel Messenger* editor described the Brethren as mostly an agricultural people with habits of thrift, economy and plainness in dress.<sup>29</sup> Even as these words were being penned by the editor, many Brethren were being attracted to the city and decline in rural membership in the brotherhood had caused alarm at many locations. D. W. Kurtz addressed the Annual Conference of 1910 on the subject:

"There is only one country church in Northern Ohio that has as many members as it had fifteen years ago. I am told that Northern Indiana has fewer members than it had ten years ago. I know of only one country church in western Pennsylvania that has more members than it had fifteen years ago. Why is it? The fundamental reason is that people are going from the country to the city. Pennsylvania has 180,000 fewer people in the country than ten years ago. What does it mean? It means that if the church is to grow it must go into the city. If it goes there it must try to save people who did not grow up in our customs."<sup>30</sup>

In the years before and after World War I, there were repeated calls for the Brethren to become active in the cities in order to conserve their membership. Rural congregations were often decimated by the mobile population of the 1920s and 1930s. The homogeneity of the church's membership was broken down by city life. The heterogeneous populations of cities formed a mosaic pattern of languages, customs, classes and cultures which made the work of the Church of the Brethren exceedingly difficult.

In spite of the problems of the city ministry, churches of the North Atlantic District were active in various ministries to city residents. The Philadelphia First Church and Germantown Church created Poor Funds to care for the underprivileged of their Sunday Schools. They conducted regular teaching and visitation ministries to jails, orphanages and city mission centers. A few far-seeing individuals fanned the embers of church extension and they burst into flame in Philadelphia and Brooklyn. For many years, members of city churches were exposed to cultural and technological influences which were unknown to rural members. Such cultural differences exposed members of the North Atlantic District to the charge of being *liberal*. D. W. Kurtz faced this challenge by remarking at an Annual Conference,

"All of us, who are called the *liberal brethren* (and I do not like the name), believe in plainness as much as you do. We believe

in the doctrines of the church as much as anybody and we love them.”<sup>31</sup>

Of the twenty-one churches which were once a part of the North Atlantic District, fifteen were outgrowths of mission efforts on the part of the original congregations of the brotherhood. Only three congregations of the North Atlantic District owe their origins to the colonial period of American history: Germantown (1723), Coventry (1724) and Amwell (1733). All others are extensions of these congregations or are outgrowths of mission activities conducted by the churches of Eastern Pennsylvania. In the nineteenth century, the following churches were organized: Philadelphia First Church (1813), Upper Dublin (Ambler) (1840), Parker Ford (1843), Harmonyville (1845, 1880), Green Tree (1845), Springfield (1864), Royersford (1893) and the Philadelphia Geiger Brethren Church (1898).

In the twentieth century, new congregations of the North Atlantic District were principally the by-products of home missions efforts. These churches include Norristown (1903), Brooklyn First (1903), Philadelphia Bethany (1904), Brooklyn Calvary (1907, 1923), Wilmington (1916), Pottstown (1918), Philadelphia Calvary (1922), Quakertown (1908, 1936), Drexel Hill (1953) and Paoli-Immanuel (1963).

### From These Roots

Leaders of the Church of the Brethren have often noted that Alexander Mack founded a church by choosing wisely from the past. He chose the best from the heritage he knew. He went to the root of New Testament Christianity. It was this return to original sources which gave life and strength to the early brotherhood. All great religious reformations, Roberston Smith once noted in his studies of the prophets, have their roots in the past.

Repeatedly leaders of the denomination and of the North Atlantic District have spoken of the priceless and unique heritage which belongs to them as members of the Church of the Brethren. There have been frequent addresses on “Christopher Sower and His Bible”, “The Historical Backgrounds to the Church of the Brethren” and “Peter Becker and The Germantown Church.” It is well to remember in order to discover the sources of strength of those who have lived in earlier ages. From these same roots the modern church may also be able to gather strength to grow.

It is wise to look to the past to discover that the problems the modern church confronts are not new. A careful reading of the records reveals that the roots of persistent and nagging problems grew many centuries ago. Joseph N. Cassel, in “The Apostolic Foundation”, reminded Brethren that David Sower, the son of Christopher Sower II, was expelled from the Church of the Brethren for having received Anna Johnson into church fellowship after having baptized her with one backward action. Sower was a resident in Norristown at the time. He defended his action in the face of a storm of protest by contending that

he was adhering to the applicant's faith and therefore it would have been wrong for her to be baptized in any other way.<sup>32</sup>

District leaders have been aware of the perils of looking too much to the past. D. Howard Keiper, a district moderator, reminded the church delegates, "Our roots are in the past but our eyes are in the future." (1952). Wilbur A. Martin gave a similar warning in 1953, "We are in danger of looking back too much and not enough to the future." Paul Tillich once gave the sage advice that it becomes necessary for growth to push the past into the past and to preserve it at the same time. Each stage of life must be left behind in order that there might be new growth. In every growing plant or tree there are scars to show that new life has become old growth.<sup>33</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

## ORIGINS OF AN INDEPENDENT DISTRICT

When various states of the brotherhood began to request the right to conduct special area conferences, a basis for independent districts was formed. Such requests for *district meetings* came from Eastern Tennessee (1846) and Indiana (1848). The press of business before the Annual Meetings was so great that the Standing Committee of the conference divided the queries and apportioned them to committees for study. The conference *Minutes* of 1848 state:

“The number of papers handed in amounted to sixty-three. Considering that the reading of all the papers, by one committee, would take up too much time, it was concluded to distribute them among ten committees, which were to examine them and report thereon to the meeting.”<sup>1</sup>

Interest in district meetings grew as the Virginia Brethren proposed a plan in 1856 to create districts of five or six churches to lessen the business of the Annual Meeting. Although the Virginia proposal was regarded as a good one, the Annual Conference was in no mood to permit independent meetings without the express consent of the brotherhood.

Elder John H. Umstad, of the Green Tree Church of the Brethren, was part of a committee appointed by the brotherhood to present a plan of evangelism for the churches. The purpose of the plan was to “spread and sustain the gospel as preached and understood by the Brethren.”<sup>2</sup> The committee report was not accepted in May, 1860 because insufficient churches were represented at the Tennessee meeting. The report suggested the formation of districts which could meet as frequently as necessary to transact their business. Bro. Umstad called a conference at the Green Tree Church “to consider the promotion of the Gospel.” Eleven churches east of the Susquehanna River sent representatives on September 22, 1860 to consider the plan of evangelism and new district organization.

The North Atlantic District<sup>3</sup> was the last to be formed in the state of Pennsylvania. It was preceded by the “Middle District of Pennsylvania” (May 9, 1861) which was organized at the Aughwick congregation. This original district comprised the churches located in the region east of the Allegheny Mountains and west of the Susquehanna River. The Southern District of Pennsylvania separated from the Middle District in 1892.

When the Annual Conference approved the formation of districts at the close of the Civil War, other districts were created in the Commonwealth. The Eastern District of Pennsylvania organized itself into the second state district at a meeting in the Tulpehocken congregation in the fall of 1866. The Western District was formed west of the Allegheny Mountains at a meeting conducted in the Grove Church near Berlin, Pennsylvania (November 5, 1866).

### Factors In The Formation of The North Atlantic District

When the Eastern District representatives met in Lebanon County to form a new district organization (1866), German-speaking people hoped for the formation of two districts east of the Susquehanna River. The English-speaking delegates prevailed in their efforts to form a single district with the fourteen existing congregations. It is clear from a study of this organizational meeting that some of the factors which led to the formation of the North Atlantic District were present in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the first place, the Church of the Brethren was officially known as German Baptist Brethren. The constituting conference at Tulpehocken conducted its business session in both the German and English languages. As late as 1889, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania requested the Annual Conference to publish the *Minutes* in both English and common German. The Lancaster Church of the Brethren held worship services in the German language until 1891. In 1888, Philadelphia County was publishing ten German-language newspapers and Montgomery County was printing two.

Between 1880 and 1910, many churches of the denomination began to conduct their worship services in English. Some churches in the northern and western portions of the Eastern District continued to conduct German-language services. Ralph W. Schlosser, who was elected to the ministry in 1911, shared these comments with the editor concerning language as a factor in the formation of the new district:

"I do not think this item figured to any important degree in the division. By 1911, all the churches in the Eastern District had English-speaking in the main. Possibly a few churches had English preaching one Sunday and German preaching the next. I remember some churches had two short English and German sermons each Sunday about the time of the division."

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Although German hymns continued in use in many congregations, by the turn of the century district conferences were always conducted in English. Many members of the church at this period were bilingual. German phrases frequently crept into English conversations. The language factor was of minor influence in the formation of the North Atlantic District in spite of the fact that many churches of the Philadelphia area considered themselves "English-speaking churches."

When the denomination changed its name to "Church of the Brethren" in 1908, this decision reflected the changing nature of its cultural

life. Many Brethren were saying that the name "German Baptist Brethren" was misleading since most Brethren no longer spoke the German language. The change in name was also a concession to missionaries and ministers who labored in city congregations where the German language was not widely spoken. By 1918, the Annual Conference granted the request of the Spring Creek congregation to repeal the earlier decision to print the *Minutes* in the German language. J. H. Longenecker explained to the conference, "We no longer have any use for German *Minutes*."

A dominant factor in the separation of the North Atlantic District from the Eastern District was the imposition by the Annual Conference of "The Order." When the Eastern District was created in 1966, there were misgivings on the part of the plainer churches about associating with churches which were lax in enforcing the various dress codes. The Annual Conference defined "plainness" (1866) by imposing this rule on its ministers and members:

"Resolved by this Annual Meeting, that the churches throughout the brotherhood enforce plainness of dress and a plain manner of wearing the hair and beard, upon the preachers and officers of the churches. By plainness of dress we mean the common order of giving shape to dress, as practiced by the old brethren and sisters generally, and by plainness of hair we mean the hair parted on the top of the head, or all combed back in a plain manner, or combed straight down all around the head, and not having the hair and beard trimmed according to the custom of the world."<sup>5</sup>

The "Order of the Brethren", as it was frequently known, did not exist in the colonial period of the denomination's history nor was it generally known in the earliest decades of the nineteenth century. Early Brethren did not stress a special garb to indicate their plainness of life. Pastor T.T. Myers, on the floor of an Annual Conference, referred to a person who had been a member of the Philadelphia First Church for seventy years. He asked her if there was a form of dress when she united with the church in the 1840s. Her reply was, "No, we knew nothing about it."<sup>6</sup>

Elder James Quinter, writing in *The Primitive Christian*, confirms this observation:

"It is well known by all whose knowledge of the brotherhood extends back forty or fifty years, that there have been Brethren in different congregations in our fraternity who made no change in the particular style of dress after they came to the church for years, and perhaps not at all. Because they did not seem to be proud or vain of their dress and showed no inclination to follow the fashions of the world, and tried to do right, they were retained in full fellowship. The fact that they were thus fellowshipped shows that our Brethren looked more to principles and conduct than to form."<sup>7</sup>

German Pietist religion perpetuated old customs by discouraging worldly dress, attendance upon amusements, travel, formal education

and mechanical improvements on the farm or in the home. Plainness of dress became a kind of ritual face which members of a sectarian church exposed to the public. Such plainness, whether in clothing, church architecture, or wagons, became a visual representation of the group's basic beliefs. The term "dress" was replete with meaning because it reflected a witness of the member to *The World*.

In addition, the "Order of the Brethren" was a sect's method of preserving its identity in a changing world. Prescribed dress was formally adopted in that period of American life when society began to change rapidly. The bonnet became the prescribed headdress for women in 1876. The wearing of gold watches was forbidden by the Annual Conference of 1889. These rules preserved the church's opposition to *The World* and identified its members with a particular cultural group. When life was more stable, such rules seemed unnecessary. The editor of *The Gospel Messenger*, when queried about style in the days of the Apostles, replied that plainness in dress in their day "remained the same from one decade to another."<sup>8</sup>

The enforcement of the dress code became a sensitive problem for the church in the opening years of the twentieth century. The Eastern District of Pennsylvania petitioned the Annual Meeting of 1900 "for immediate action to help stay the advance of worldly fashions within the churches of the district." Late in 1901, an Annual Conference committee visited eight churches: the Coventry, Parker Ford, Royersford, Green Tree, Norristown, Upper Dublin, Sandbrook and Philadelphia First churches. At each visit, the committee instructed the membership concerning "the Order and church unity in nonconformity to the world and committed them to the care of our Heavenly Father."<sup>9</sup>

At the Upper Dublin Church, the membership was "earnestly admonished to come to the Order of the church in nonconformity." At the Philadelphia First Church, the committee reported:

"The sisters all had the prayer covering on at the communion and an increasing number of them are wearing the sisters' bonnet. Our visit and counsel were received kindly and the outlook is hopeful." Up until 1911, there were seventy statements in the Annual Conference *Minutes* touching on the dress question. An appeal for a clarification and restatement of the church's position came before the conferences of 1910 and 1911. The full accounts of these conference debates show that many Brethren objected to the practice of making dress a test of fellowship. "We are proclaiming to the world that we regard our forms a condition of salvation", objected James A. Sell.<sup>10</sup>

D. W. Kurtz, the pastor of the Philadelphia First Church, objected to the Dress Committee's report on the ground that it required a specific cut and uniform. His argument was lucid and convincing:

"Go to the people who never heard of the Brethren Church and they want the Word of God for it. We can by the Word of God defend our baptism before the whole world. We can take our feet-washing, our agape, our distinguished doctrine, to the whole world, as long as we have the Scriptures; but I defy anybody to read out of these Scrip-

tures a cut or a form. You can read it in but you can't read it out. If you approach Scripture with a dogma, you can shape it so as to get it in, but you can't get it out."<sup>11</sup>

The churches along the Eastern seaboard were reluctant to accept a prescribed dress code. They were willing to follow a doctrine or a practice which was Scripturally based but were unwilling to practice what Jesus Himself did not teach. T. T. Myers, who was once admonished by an Annual Conference committee for wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, observed, "I would not give two cents for a man's religion if it is all in his clothes."<sup>12</sup> Churches of the Philadelphia area envisioned many of their members as being disfellowshipped for not wearing standardized and prescribed dress. They contended that any such legalistic action would harm the church's ministry to the city.

In 1911, the Annual Conference agreed that a prescribed mode of dress was to remain a brotherhood ideal but it was no longer to be a test of fellowship. The skilful leadership of H. C. Early in handling this problem saved many members to the denomination in this period of crisis. It is possible that the division of the Eastern District into two sections saved the Philadelphia area churches for the brotherhood.

In 1914, the Annual Conference appointed a Dress Reform Committee "to do positive, constructive teaching against worldliness in dress." The committee reported in 1918 that its work was meeting with opposition because of a lack of cooperation on the part of church members and by the failure of leaders to remain faithful to the simple gospel. For a period of years, this committee sponsored Annual Conference programs and advertised the names of merchants who would sell acceptable, standardized clothing to the Brethren.

A third factor in the formation of the North Atlantic District arose out of the urban-centered ministry of these Seaboard churches. Of the original eleven congregations which petitioned for separation, five were churches with very close city ties. One of the reasons for separation was stated in the petition:

"It is evident that we are not doing the successful and active church work which should be done in our cities and towns, for the reason that we feel our Home Missionary Board is not sufficiently active and interested to encourage and support aggressive church work."<sup>13</sup>

Active city mission work was comparatively new to most congregations of the brotherhood. In 1882, Elder Jacob T. Myers wrote, "It is only of late years that we have been looked upon by the so-called evangelical churches as being an aggressive and evangelizing church.<sup>14</sup> Many congregations, retaining a rural orientation, were content to minister to small communities while the great urban centers were neglected.

It was not until 1896 that the Annual Conference established guidelines for city mission work. At this time, the General Missionary and Tract Committee of the brotherhood was conducting missions in Germantown, Pennsylvania, Washington, D. C., Chicago, Illinois, and

Ottawa, Kansas. Mission work was being conducted by some congregations of the Eastern District prior to these brotherhood efforts.

A few Brethren leaders, who fearlessly pleaded the cause of missions, awakened churches of the North Atlantic District to their responsibilities. D. L. Miller, Wilbur B. Stover, Galen B. Royer and J. G. Royer, all of whom visited the district regularly, were tireless in their appeals for home and foreign mission work. City congregations began to develop poor funds, mite societies and clothing committees to minister to the poor of their neighborhoods. These outreach ministries eventually won into church membership people who had no background in Brethren traditions. Such city memberships began to contribute to the differences which eventually resulted in the formation of a separate district.

A fourth factor which contributed to the separation of the North Atlantic District from the Eastern District was the tension which formed about doctrinal differences. For most people, these differences were vaguely defined by the terms *liberal* and *conservative*. The terms embraced a wide range of practices and convictions. The exposure of city memberships to the influences of higher education and to the impact of new theological movements made them the target of criticism from rural church people. At the turn of the century, liberalism in religion in the cities was regarded as heresy. In a letter to the editor, Graybill Hershey, a minister of the White Oak congregation, stated that the division of the district occurred because one section of Pennsylvania was more liberal than the other section.<sup>15</sup>

In reality, this was a period of change for the church and society. Brethren leaders of the North Atlantic District referred often to the fact that the church was facing "a new world order" at the time of World War I. New leadership was moving the denomination toward new concepts in church government. Members of the church were beginning to discover that doctrine and legislation can be barren and divisive. The church was compelled to take a new approach to the mounting world problems.

In this period of changing thought, churches of the North Atlantic District did not escape the influence of the divisive theologies of the era. W. S. Price, an active churchman of the district, recalled that seminaries within the district were often divided in the theologies they taught. As young men attended these schools, they reflected their differing theologies. Crozer, Eastern Baptist, Mount Airy, Princeton, Temple, Union and Yale seminaries were not in agreement in their teachings. Churches were keenly aware of ministers who were labeled as "liberal" or "conservative." The result of this diversity of training, according to Bro. Price, was that

"a church could hire a person with a modern viewpoint, to be followed by one with a conservative viewpoint. This must have been disturbing to the congregation and at times it took a toll of the membership."

A final factor in the division of the district was the failure of the churches of the Philadelphia and New York areas to win representation on the Annual Conference Standing Committees. When the arguments were expressed before the Winona Lake Conference of Indiana (1910), this failure on the part of the eastern churches to win representation on the policy-making committee of the brotherhood was a grievance. Perhaps the real problem lay in the fact that the number of elders in the eastern part of the district stood at half a dozen whereas the remainder of the district had nearly fifty elders. Such disparity created unequal representation for the eleven petitioning churches.<sup>16</sup>

Interestingly enough, when the district was granted the right to become independent, only two churches from the eastern part of the district were represented. The Philadelphia First Church was represented by D. W. Kurtz, and the Germantown Church was represented by M. C. Swigart. The St. Joseph, Missouri, Annual Conference granted to the eastern portion the right to an independent status.

Jacob T. Myers, speaking before the 1910 Annual Conference, stated the problem clearly:

"About twenty years ago, when the first committee, appointed by the Annual Meeting, came to the eastern churches on committee work, Bro. Royer being the chairman of that first committee and the whole district being together, it was strongly urged that another district be organized. After the matter was discussed. . .some agreed that we would not press the matter, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania assuring us that certain demands would be complied with. Those demands were not complied with and a strong pressure was then brought to bear upon the district to have a line drawn, to have two districts instead of one. On the strength of that demand, a decision was made by the district that these eastern English churches should have a representative on Standing Committee every other year. This satisfied the churches. We had that representative for one year and then a paper was brought before the district meeting, demanding that this concession be put out of the way and that the eastern English churches be not given the privilege they had the year before. On the strength of that decision the churches concerned positively said they would not pay another cent to the district treasury until they were granted a representative on the Standing Committee. This we have been denied."<sup>17</sup>

The following chart of representation by the two sections of the district reveals some of the problem. One must remember that the western and northern churches represented basically a farming class and the eastern churches frequently represented a business class. The disparity in representation by churches is clearly shown:

year	place of conference	church representation by northern and western churches	church representation by eastern churches
1896	Ottawa, Kansas	11	3
1897	Frederick, Maryland	16	5
1902	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania	27	9
1905	Bristol, Tennessee	21	4
1906	Springfield, Illinois	19	2
1907	Los Angeles, California	15	5
1908	Des Moines, Iowa	19	3
1909	Harrisonburg, Virginia	24	8
1910	Winona Lake, Indiana	31	3

### Decisions of the Conferences

The Green Tree Church and the Philadelphia First Church actively petitioned the Eastern District for a division. The Green Tree Church submitted its petition on April 3, 1882 when the District Meeting met in the Coventry Church. At this time, the congregation requested a Standing Committee delegate from the English-speaking churches. The Philadelphia First Church made its request for a division between the English-speaking and the German-speaking churches fourteen years later. This petition was advanced to the Spring Creek District Meeting on April 28, 1896. These requests for representation and division were not granted.

In 1904, both the Philadelphia First Church and the Green Tree Church submitted petitions for a separate district. The Tulpehocken District Meeting of the same year acted by appointing a committee on territorial division. The committee, composed of F. P. C. Cassel, A. L. Grater, J. H. Longenecker, Cyrus B. Gibbel and J. T. Myers, delayed action and had no constructive plan to offer in 1908. The committee was continued with instructions to "submit a more satisfactory plan at the next District Meeting."<sup>18</sup>

The differences between the churches in the eastern sector and the western sector of the Eastern District continued to mount. On April 4, 1910, the Philadelphia First Church submitted a third request for the division of the district. The petition named eleven churches which wished to be organized into "the South Eastern District of Pennsylvania." The churches named in the petition were the Geiger Memorial Brethren, Philadelphia First, Germantown, Green Tree, Coventry, Parker Ford, Royersford and Upper Dublin, all in the state of Pennsylvania. In addition, Amwell, and Bethel were named from the state of New Jersey, and the Brooklyn First Church was named from the state of New York.

The petition stated, "In case this request is not granted by the District Meeting, then we ask that this petition be sent to Annual Meeting." The Annville District Meeting, assembled on April 13, 14, 1910, conscientiously believed it could not endorse the paper. Objec-

tions were drawn to a division on the grounds that: 1).--a class line rather than a true district line had been requested; and 2).--the integrity of the Eastern District had been called in question in the handling of mission funds. The petition was forwarded without endorsement to the Winona Lake (Indiana) Annual Conference.

The Indiana Conference devoted lengthy discussion to the paper. No less than nineteen speeches were delivered either in favor or against the request. Jacob T. Myers spoke several times in favor of the petition. The various speeches clearly intimated, if they did not directly state, that there were "family differences" within the Eastern District and that these difficulties had grown over a period of no less than two decades. The difficulties were of such a nature as to require visits from Annual Conference committees, one of which was active at the time the petition was made. The Indiana Conference regarded the petition as irregular because it was not endorsed by the district nor was it accompanied by a full statement of the proposed district organization.

The 1910 Annual Conference granted a committee to the Eastern District "to investigate the advisability of division", "to labor for reconciliation" and to "report to the next Annual Meeting."<sup>19</sup> This conference committee consisted of P. S. Miller, J. M. Kagey and J. A. Snider.

On September 21, 1910, at the call of the conference committee, the Eastern District sent seventy-one delegates to the Ephrata Church of the Brethren to discuss in a "full and free manner" the question of the division of the district. Seventeen of the delegates represented the eleven churches which petitioned for a division. The speakers "felt at perfect liberty to follow such line of thought and argument as suited" their view of the subject. There were twelve speeches in favor of the division and six opposed to it. "There were many earnest and spirited speeches, but all discussion was in the most kindly spirit."<sup>20</sup>

The Annual Conference committee, at the request of the Ephrata meeting, appointed a committee of five persons to consider a line for dividing the district and to give fair consideration to all property. The district committee consisted of J. Kurtz Miller and M. C. Swigart from the petitioning churches and John Herr and S. H. Hertzler from the rest of the district. These four men, empowered to select the fifth member, chose S. R. Zug. The district committee was instructed to report its findings to the 1911 District Meeting. In the meantime, according to the directions of the District Meeting, "no one else shall busy themselves respecting this work." George N. Falkenstein, serving as secretary of the Ephrata Conference, observed: "Thus the very pleasant Special District Meeting passed into history."

The newly-appointed district committee met at Elizabethtown College on December 12, 1910. After thorough discussion, the members agreed to draw a new district line running from Wilmington, Delaware through Coatesville to Birdsboro, thence on a northeasterly direction to the county line one mile north of Pottstown. The line paralleled the Schuylkill River to a point one mile east of Mingo Station, northeast to

North Wales, to New Hope and north along the Delaware River to the New York State line. The proposed new district comprised the whole of the state of New Jersey, Greater New York City, Long Island and all the territory in Pennsylvania east of the line.

The Norristown Church petitioned the committee on division to place the congregation "where we feel we properly belong" and "where we would do the best work." The committee recommended that the Norristown Church should remain a part of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Without a dissenting vote of the delegates gathered at the White Oak congregation in Manheim, Pennsylvania, consent was granted on May 4, 1911, for the new district to organize. A committee, consisting of Jesse C. Ziegler and John Herr, were appointed to make a settlement of the funds in the treasuries. The Eastern District paid to the new Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York the sum of \$443.62 to settle all accounts.

An organizational meeting convened in the Germantown Church of the Brethren on May 11, 1911. At the time of the division of the Eastern District, 8,000 members constituted the whole district. Twelve churches, representing 1,500 members, sent twenty delegates to the first conference of the Southeastern District of Pennsylvania. These churches were: Germantown, Coventry, Amwell, Philadelphia First Church, Upper Dublin, Green Tree, Union Church of New Jersey, Geiger Memorial Brethren Church, Parker Ford, Brooklyn First, Royersford and Philadelphia Bethany.

The first district organization consisted of the following officers: Moderator, Jacob T. Myers; Writing Clerk, M. C. Swigart; Reading Clerk, D. W. Kurtz; Treasurer, W. S. Price; Auditing Committee, James A. Harley (3 years), S. B. Croft (2 years) and Philip R. Markley (1 year). The District Sunday School Secretary was W. G. Nyce. The representative on the Annual Conference Standing Committee was Jacob T. Myers, with J. Kurtz Miller as the Alternate.

An announcement in *The Gospel Messenger* on May 20, 1911 publicized the division of the district in Eastern Pennsylvania. It also stated that since Bro. Myer's health was failing, J. Kurtz Miller would attend as the Standing Committee delegate.<sup>21</sup> The special Annual Conference committee made its report to the St. Joseph (Missouri) Conference on June 8, 1911, indicating that a satisfactory division had been made without dissent. The delegates from the new district of Southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York were seated.

When the Union Church of New Jersey merged with the Amwell congregation in 1912, the original churches in the new district were reduced to eleven. In the fifty-nine years which followed, other congregations from the Eastern District merged with the new district or were formed as the direct result of mission endeavors, bringing the total number of churches to twenty-one. The following congregations eventually became part of the North Atlantic District:

Harmonyville (October 30, 1913)  
Brooklyn Calvary (October 28, 1915)

Norristown (October 25, 1917)  
 Pottstown (October 25, 1917)  
 Wilmington (April 24, 1919)  
 Philadelphia Calvary (April 26, 1923)  
 Springfield (April 28, 1927)  
 Quakertown (April 23, 1936)  
 Drexel Hill (October 28, 1953)  
 Paoli-Immanuel (October 17, 1964)

The district has had three names. Assuming a geographical name initially, it called itself "the Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York." Although the Wilmington Church became a part of the district officially in 1919, the district name did not reflect this change until 1936. Consideration was given to the writing of a new constitution in 1925, but no action was taken until 1936. In this year the district was named "District of Southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Eastern New York and Northern Delaware." This lengthy name was retained when a new constitution was adopted in 1951 in spite of the fact that many district members were uncomfortable with it. On October 30, 1954, at the Wilmington District Meeting, the name was changed to another geographical title, "The North Atlantic District."

### Continuing Cooperation With the Eastern District

#### The Brethren Home

Jacob T. Myers, who often made earnest appeals for a separate district, said, "Between these churches. . .the kindest feeling prevails."<sup>22</sup> This goodwill expressed itself in continuing cooperation between the two districts. Since the North Atlantic District had no social welfare institutions of its own, it turned to the Eastern District to use the Brethren Home at Neffsville and continued to send elected trustees to the Children's Aid Society.

A ministry to the aged began in the Eastern District with the efforts of Samuel R. Zug and Benjamin Z. Eby, both of whom felt the need for a Home for the homeless. Interested congregations of the district sent representatives to a meeting at Manheim, Pennsylvania, on April 16, 1896, to consider a ministry to the aged in the name of the church. By April 1, 1897, the first guests were placed in a farmhouse on the land of Adam Basehore near Manheim. This original Home was located within the bounds of the Chiques congregation.

The Brethren Home was relocated on a ten-acre plot of ground which had been donated by Nathan Brubaker of Neffsville, Pennsylvania. A large, substantial brick building, located on "a picturesque eminence and surrounded by gardens", was erected and dedicated on November 17, 1910. Since the Home was founded before the North Atlantic District was formed, the division did not alter the privileges or the responsibilities of the new district toward it.

The official title of the Home was "The Brethren Home of the Church of the Brethren." The charter was granted by the Court of Common Pleas of Lancaster County on February 15, 1897. When the Home relocated in 1910, the trustees changed the charter and defined its purposes in these words:

"The purposes of the Corporation, to which all its resources and the exercise of its powers are dedicated, are to alleviate the distress and hardships of the aging and by ministering to the particular needs of these persons, and by this Christian witness to advance the Kingdom of God, promote social welfare, and lessen the burdens of government. The Corporation does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to its members."<sup>23</sup>

The name of the Home was changed to "The Brethren Village" in 1972. The new name was chosen to reflect the complex of apartments, infirmary, chapel, shops, pavilion and garages which constitute the modernized geriatric community. "The Brethren Village" is not jurisdictionally responsible to Annual Conference or to any District Conference, although it has enjoyed a close affiliation with the Atlantic Northeast District. Control of this community is invested in a body of approximately five hundred shareholders and trustees, all of whom are required by the charter to be members of the Church of the Brethren. A census of the community in 1970 showed that sixty-five per cent of the residents were members of the denomination. Most of these residents were from the Atlantic Northeast District.

### Children's Aid Society

For many years the Church of the Brethren provided special care and housing for orphaned and homeless children. This work with children was initiated in the denomination as early as 1873 when a query appeared before the Annual Conference requesting the founding of a Home for orphaned children. The Middle District of Indiana already had such a Home under consideration. The Annual Conference permitted districts to enter this ministry. Middle District of Indiana proceeded to establish two Homes for children, one at Honey Creek (1883) and another at Mexico (1889).

Child Rescue Work was placed into the hands of a committee of three persons at the brotherhood level. This committee fostered sentiment for the work throughout the districts and offered assistance in organizing the program. In the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, a certificate of incorporation was filed on June 20, 1914. The Board of Trustees of the Children's Aid Society met at Neffsville, Pennsylvania on July 15, 1912 and authorized the erection of a Detention Home for children. H. K. Ober wrote of the project:

"The object of this movement is to receive orphans and homeless children and to care for them until a Christian home can be found in which they may be placed. It is conducted on the principle that the Christian home is the natural and best place in which a child can develop into a useful citizen."<sup>24</sup>

From 1914 until 1962, the Detention Home was managed by a board of directors elected from the Eastern and the North Atlantic districts. In the period of its ministry to the homeless, the rejected, the delinquent and the emotionally-disturbed, it cared for nearly 1,000 children and youth. As the Home was transformed more and more into a community Home and lost its church-centered ministry, trustees of the North Atlantic District expressed a concern that the Home should no longer be associated with the Children's Aid Society. The Home was sold to the Brethren Home at Neffsville in 1963.

The following persons from the North Atlantic District have labored as trustees on behalf of the Children's Aid Society: Ira C. Holsopple (1911-1918), Mary S. Geiger (1911-1916), Charles F. McKee (1911-1924), Quincy Leckrone (1911-1914), Amanda Kratz (1911-1937), Paul H. Bowman, Sr. (1914-1915), Harry W. Rohrer (1915-1923), Philip R. Markley (1918-1926), Frank Foster (1920-1925), Mrs. W. C. Rosenberger (1933-1934), Mrs. William H. B. Schnell (1924-1939), Harvey S. Replogle (1925-1941), Clifton Buckwalter (1926-1931), Trostle P. Dick (1931-1946), Mrs. Earl M. Bowman (1934-1938), Mrs. Edward Schwass (1937-1947), Mrs. Luther J. Lutz (1938-1943), Mrs. Bertha A. Grater (1939-1949), Clayton H. Gehman (1941-1945), Mrs. Eloise Hanawalt (1943-1948), Mrs. B. F. Waltz (1945-1960), Harper S. Snavely (1946-1947), Mrs. D. Howard Keiper (1947-1957), Glen E. Norris (1947-1951), Mrs. Wilbur A. Martin (1948-1953), Mrs. Alvin S. Alderfer (1949-1964), Mrs. Henry H. Funk (1951-1956), Mrs. Lawrence High (1953-1961), Mrs. Berkey Knavel (1956-1961), Linford J. Rotenberger (1957-1962), Mrs. Helen Davis (1960-1965), Mrs. Luke H. Brandt (1959) and Luke H. Brandt (1960).

### **Peter Becker Memorial Home**

In 1960, some senior citizens of four Eastern Pennsylvania congregations began to promote plans for a home for the aged in the region north of Philadelphia. Aware of the lack of economical facilities for Brethren in this section of the state, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln G. Nyce presented a query to a special council meeting of the Indian Creek congregation. In response to this request to consider the purchase or construction of a building to care for the aged, a committee was chosen to study the question. This committee consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Carroll D. Hendricks, Mr. and Mrs. Levi Seese and Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln G. Nyce.

On November 19, 1960, members of the Hatfield, Indian Creek, Mingo and Skippack churches met to consider a plan for housing the elderly. An invitation was extended to the churches of the North Atlantic District to participate in the planning. By October 10, 1963, the Peter Becker Memorial Home was legally incorporated with a board of directors and a set of by-laws. Land close to Harleysville, Pennsylvania, consisting of 20.1 acres, was purchased at a cost of \$30,000. Indebtedness on this land was cleared in 1967.

The land lay adjacent to the historic Klein meetinghouse and the

Peter Becker grave in Franconia township. The location of the property led naturally to the name of the institution.



*Peter Becker Marker and Klein Meetinghouse*

In 1964, the Board of Directors appointed a Planning Committee, consisting of Franklin Shive, Ray Landes, Ralph Koffel, Norman Bergen, Virgil Sommers, Lincoln G. Nyce and Ralph Jones. The first Women's Auxiliary was organized on July 14, 1964 with the following officers: President, Miriam Steely; First Vice-president, Minerva Hoffman; Second Vice-president, Esther Seese; Secretary, Elizabeth Reber; and Treasurer, Ruth Fritz.

The Board of Directors authorized Buchart Associates of York and Lancaster to draw plans for the first building (July 12, 1966). The building was constructed with funds received from the sale of building bonds, contributions and legacies. Ronald R. M. Moyer was employed as the first full-time director of fund-raising, beginning on October 1, 1968. Actual construction on the first unit began in 1969 and, by May, 1971, the first guests were entering the Home. The first building cost \$714,000 and the equipment \$125,000. By July 24, 1971, the Home was two-thirds filled with residents.

The growth of the Peter Becker Memorial Home has been phenomenal. In 1972, the Board of Directors announced an expansion program. Action was taken to construct an ancillary wing and six independent living apartments. The new wing included an auditorium-recreational-therapy area capable of handling 200 persons. With the completion of these new additions on May 18, 1974, the Peter Becker Memorial Home had a capital investment of nearly two million dollars. The growth of the

institution has been so rapid that it has become known generally as "The Peter Becker Community."

On July 28, 1970, Ronald R. M. Moyer (1935- ), a licensed Nursing Home Administrator, became the administrator of the Home. Born at Perkasie, Pennsylvania, in the Indian Creek congregation, he is a graduate of Souderton High School and has attended Penn State University and the University of Pennsylvania. He is the son of Joseph G. and Ethel A. Moyer.

The charter of the Home states its purposes as follows:

"To establish, operate and maintain housing, nursing, recreational, therapeutic and rehabilitation facilities for retired men and women and such others as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, determine on a nonprofit basis for all, without regard to religion, denomination, race or color."

Members of the Board of Directors from the North Atlantic District have included Linford Rotenberger, Miriam Steely, Stanley L. Davis and Carl F. Reber.



*Peter Becker Memorial Home*

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FIRST GREAT WORK OF THE CHURCH

Although the nineteenth century has been designated the "Great Century of Protestant Missions", the Church of the Brethren showed its greatest interest in the mission movement in the early decades of the twentieth century. The church was slow in accepting its missionary responsibilities in spite of its rootage in European Pietism. The Moravians, who also had deep roots in Pietism, led other church groups in the eighteenth century to a full appreciation of the nature of the Christian faith. They undoubtedly founded more missions since the start of the Protestant Reformation than all the rest of Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

T. T. Myers once described the early Church of the Brethren as a missionary brotherhood. He stated before the Annual Conference of 1908,

"By their holy zeal, the cause spread to Marienborn, Crefeld, Epstein, into Switzerland, into Holland and across the waters into the new world. We are safe to say that the original eight in twenty years (1708-1728) grew to one thousand."<sup>2</sup>

Peter Becker's missionary zeal has frequently been described as he and his associates visited one settlement after another in the new world, alternately riding and walking beside one horse.<sup>3</sup> It is not widely known that George Adam Martin had a dream of proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians of the Shawnee nation in western Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

The church's missionary spirit lay dormant for nearly eighty-four years (1776-1860). The denomination's use of the German language and its resistance to cultural change confined the church's growth to German-speaking settlements. It was not until the decade of the Civil War (1860-1870) that organized efforts were used to awaken mission interest within the brotherhood. The conference of 1859, meeting in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, gave the churches "liberty to move on the subject of spreading and sustaining the Gospel as preached and understood by the Brethren."<sup>5</sup> It named to the first Mission Board Daniel P. Sayler, John Kline, John H. Umstad, Samuel Layman, John Metzger and James Quinter.

A few far-seeing individuals sounded the call for missions in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The opening decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the birth of the leaders who were to stir the church to action. James Quinter (1816-1888) accompanied John H. Umstad (1802-1873) on a preaching tour into western Pennsylvania in 1842. Under the influence of Quinter, "the boy preacher", John Wise (1822-1909) was converted and eventually became a prominent leader of the mission movement in the Church of the Brethren. In addition to these Brethren, Enoch Eby (1828-1910) of Middle Pennsylvania, D. L. Miller (1841-1921) of Illinois and H. C. Early (1855-1941) of Virginia were leading spokesmen for a greater church outreach. A missionary plan was eventually adopted by the denomination at Dayton, Ohio

(1884) and a permanent mission board was organized "in the shade of an apple tree in the yard of Moses Miller" (July 7, 1884).<sup>6</sup> Soon after this event someone asked D. L. Miller whether a missionary work could be started in the Church of the Brethren. His reply was, "It is already started. We have \$8.69 in the treasury."<sup>7</sup>

### Church Extension

Enthusiasm for missions was generated by the concerns of a few leaders of the church. D. L. Miller's expression, "The church that is not a missionary church is a dead church" became a watchword among the Brethren. H. C. Early inspired many delegates of Annual Conference by insisting, "Missions, Sunday Schools and colleges are another trinity in which I believe."<sup>8</sup> *The Missionary Visitor* (1894-1930) fearlessly trumpeted for missions at a time when many Brethren were not convinced of the world-wide imperatives of the Great Commission. As late as 1919, J. J. Yoder appealed from the floor of the Annual Conference, "He who plans with God must make his plans large."

The vision of the Church of the Brethren in a world ministry began to emerge at the turn of the twentieth-century. The church embarked on mission programs in Denmark (1876), Sweden (1876), India (1894), Asia Minor (1895), France (1899) and Switzerland (1899). The dream of a world mission for the church was expressed by some of its leaders. They said the church should have mission work in China, Australia, England, Germany and other parts of Europe. "Our opportunities are enlarging and we should prepare to enter every field when there is an open door."<sup>9</sup> The interest in mission expansion was outracing the funds to support it. In 1906, the General Mission Board asserted, "The past year in the mission fields occupied by the Brethren has become one of deeper rooting in faith rather than reaching out in branches."<sup>10</sup>

Interest in foreign and home missions developed together in the North Atlantic District. Wilbur B. Stover (1864-1930), a pioneer in foreign missions, ministered briefly as pastor of the Germantown Church (1891-1893) in preparation for overseas work. Bro. Stover applied to the General Mission Board for the right to serve as a missionary for the denomination in India. The board granted permission for him to serve provided he met two conditions: he must conform to the order of the church with respect to dress and he must agree to serve five years, subject to and under the direction of the General Mission Board. Bro. Stover expressed his thoughts to his *Diary* with these words:

"I may go if I dress just so. God forgive such a way of looking at it. The beginning and the end of it was dress. The greatest thing in the world---dress. Hasten the day when we may see the man in preference to his clothes."<sup>11</sup>

Wilbur B. Stover's experiences at Germantown exposed him to the urgent need for sharing the gospel in the urban homeland. He wrote about the need:

about it, our district comprises one-fifth of the whole population of the United States.''<sup>13</sup>

On October 25, 1917, the district mission board was incorporated as "the Philadelphia District Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren." It provided both funds and leadership for fellowships at Harmonyville, Wilmington, Pottstown and the two Brooklyn churches. In 1924, the board reported that so many district churches were involved in building programs that insufficient funds were available for mission support. During the depression years (1930-1938), district giving for mission work was greatly reduced in spite of the fact that five district churches were granted certificates of achievement from the General Mission Board for increased mission support.

Laura E. Moyer (1899- ) began to work as an English-speaking missionary in the Brooklyn Italian Church. Beginning in 1931, her work consisted of visitation, counseling, teaching and supervising various church and Sunday School organizations. Her years of teaching experience in Souderton, Pennsylvania (1922-1927), prepared her for the unusual ministry she gave to the district and the brotherhood. She was supported in this city mission work by the General Mission Board and the district board. Miss Moyer rendered her services to the families and friends of the Italian Church for thirty-six years until it was merged with the Brooklyn First Church (1931-1967). Her ministry has continued with the Brooklyn First Church since the merger.

In spite of the joint efforts of the district mission board and devoted leaders, the churches of Philadelphia began to lose membership in the face of radically changing neighborhoods. These city churches were located in crisis communities which were changing from white, middle-class sections into racially-mixed communities.

The following chart compares the growth of the district, the brotherhood and the four counties of Chester, Bucks, Montgomery and Philadelphia in which most of the North Atlantic District churches are located:

Year	District Membership	Brotherhood Membership	Four Counties
1911	1,550	83,000	1,800,000
1920	2,237	107,000	2,220,685
1930	3,006	141,000	2,440,121
1940	3,455	173,700	2,463,922
1950	3,174	186,000	2,728,434
1960	3,633	200,000	3,038,369
1970	3,023	211,000	3,265,775

The North Atlantic District demonstrated its finest growth in membership in the decades from 1911 until 1930. The depression years (1930-1940) witnessed no decisive change in church membership. Many of the congregations actually suffered their severest losses in membership during the disruptive years of World War II. Dislocations of pop-

"The opportunities at home are exceedingly abundant. We have in the large cities the foreigners, the Chinese, the Italians, the Jews---all classes brought right here in America before our feet, and it is now our opportunity, under grace to go in and win a victory for the glory of God." <sup>12</sup>

T. T. Myers made a tour of the mission field in Smyrna, Asia Minor, in 1895 in company with four other persons. When he returned to America to continue his ministry at the Philadelphia First Church, he initiated mission work in Brooklyn, New York (1897) with Alice J. Boone as a Sunday School worker and visitor.

In the year in which the North Atlantic District separated from the Eastern District, the brotherhood authorized a plan "to develop the home and foreign missionary interests." Each district was encouraged to appoint a district mission secretary and each congregation to appoint a missionary committee to promote the growing overseas work. In 1911, the brotherhood was supporting forty-seven persons on the foreign field, underwritten by a budget which amounted to \$69,132. Within the decade, the budget was quadrupled in order to support 122 workers overseas.

In 1911, only one half of the congregations of the brotherhood were giving financial support to the mission enterprise. Several congregations of the North Atlantic District (Royersford, Coventry, Philadelphia First) were contributing liberally to the mission movement. In order to encourage increased support, the North Atlantic District appointed mission secretaries. Among those who served in this position were M. C. Swigart, H. W. Rohrer, W. W. Kulp, W. G. Nyce and Trostle P. Dick. In the period from 1912 to 1917, the district congregations gave \$5,742.36 in support of mission work.

In the period from 1911 to 1970, the work of home and foreign missions was promoted by members of the district mission board, the missions and church extension commission and the commission on witness. The following district personnel have served on these organizations: A. S. Alderfer, C. P. Buckwalter, W. Dean Crouse, Stanley L. Davis, Sr., Neil Detweiler, John C. Dettra, A. M. Dixon, J. M. Fogelsanger, Alfred George, Irvin K. Hauseman, John R. E. Hoover, B. Franklin Hottel, H. T. Horne, Harold F. Keppen, Elwood A. Kirschner, Philip R. Markley, Wilbur A. Martin, Ross D. Murphy, W. S. Price, Paul M. Robinson, Lester M. Rosenberger, Donald W. Rummel, Harper M. Snavely, Eli K. Stoltzfus, M. C. Swigart, B. F. Waltz and Galen S. Young. In the years in which the mission board was an independent organization, W. S. Price, C. P. Buckwalter, Philip R. Markley and B. Franklin Hottel served successively as treasurers.

The mission board carried responsibility for stimulating support for a variety of mission projects, seeking leadership for home and foreign mission endeavors and extending the church's outreach into rural and urban settlements. These board members were conscious of their responsibility to a heavily-populated district: "When we stop to think

ulation and rapidly changing neighborhoods contributed heavily to a declining district membership after 1945.

The district mission board recommended the endorsement of the Five Year Forward program of the Church of the Brethren (April 24, 1919). The board established the following goals for the district: 350 additions to the churches by baptism; the calling of seven young men to the ministry; an annual giving of \$5,625 to the cause of missions; two new missionaries for the foreign field in five years; \$4,666 for the work of the district mission board; and one new church fellowship begun under the direction of the mission board.<sup>14</sup>

The Five Year Forward Movement (1919-1923) was the denomination's response to world need. It was clearly an attempt to involve all congregations in a goal-setting program. The original request for the program, arising in the Bridgewater Church of Virginia, asked for a program to increase resources and personnel "to meet the enormous needs of the church and the world with a more generous spirit."<sup>15</sup> "Many Brethren applauded the new world outlook which was forming within the denomination. In the summer of 1919, twenty-four state districts across the brotherhood were visited by a splendid body of young men and women on behalf of missionary education.

Charles D. Bonsack, who was the brotherhood director of the Forward Movement, visited the North Atlantic District in 1920 to explain the purposes of the new program. He showed that the plan was closely related to the Interchurch World Movement which tried to draw the denominations from their sectarian isolation into involvement with other denominations in order to minister to the whole world. The Interchurch Movement studied the needs of the nation county by county and the needs of the world country by country until it failed for a lack of funds. Bro. Bonsack saw in this movement much which was beneficial to the church:

"It awakened the church to a sense of stewardship. It discovered that the Christian Church is the mother of all philanthropy. It brought the pastors and others together in conferences, creating an impression and an interest that will remain with many. It suggested cooperative possibilities which will bear fruit in the future. It has shown that cooperation is essential if we are to convince men of the claims of Jesus. Denominations arrayed against each other cannot witness for Christ."<sup>16</sup>

### Overseas Missions

Several North Atlantic District pastors were commissioned to minister overseas as workers in the Scandinavian peninsula. The Church of the Brethren inaugurated a church-centered ministry in Denmark and Sweden when a young man from Denmark requested baptism. In response to the request, Christian Hope was elected to the ministry in Northern Illinois (1875) and was authorized to begin a work outside of the United States. By 1877, eight persons had been baptized in Den-

mark. Over the next four decades, churches were established for the Church of the Brethren in Sweden and Denmark.

In 1911, J. F. Graybill (1874-1949) and his wife Alice began a ministry which was to extend for them over the next thirty-two years. In time, he was assisted by other missionaries and their wives. Among those who served were A. F. Wine (1913-1917), William E. Glasmire (1919-1923), Neils Esbensen (1920-1924) and Glen E. Norris (1929-1934). Prior to his appointment as pastor of the Malmo Church of Sweden, J. F. Graybill ministered as pastor of the Amwell congregation (1907-1909).

Glen E. Norris (1899- ) and Lois Detweiler Norris (1901- ) served the Malmo Church of Sweden from August, 1929 until July, 1934. A graduate of the Quakertown High School (1918), Bro. Norris was elected to the ministry on May 10, 1922 at the Pottstown Church of the Brethren. Shortly after graduating from Juniata College, he united in marriage with Lois Anna Detweiler of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (August 18, 1925). Before entering overseas work, the Norrises ministered to the Parker Ford congregation (1927-1929).



*Glen E. and Lois Detweiler Norris*

Bro. and Sister Norris returned to America in 1934 and soon thereafter became pastor to the Twenty-Eighth Street Church in Altoona, Pennsylvania (1935-1945) and the Ambler Church of the Brethren (1945-1953) in the North Atlantic District. Bro. Norris ministered to the Hanover Church of the Brethren (1953-1959) and to the Williamsburg

(Pennsylvania) Church before accepting the work as editor of the adult publications for the brotherhood (1960-1966). He was honored with a special citation in 1967 for his work on behalf of the brotherhood.

### Work in India

Perhaps no single religious movement in recent centuries has fired the imaginations of people so much as the mission efforts of the Christian churches. As a result of this movement, Bible societies, missionary societies and medical societies proliferated in an attempt to enthrone Christ in the various cultures of the world. When the Church of the Brethren embarked on foreign mission work, it directed its earliest attention to the poorer classes of foreign lands.

When Bro. and Sister Wilbur B. Stover and Bertha Ryan inaugurated mission work in Bulsar, India (1894), their earliest ministries were directed to six hundred starving boys and girls who were gathered in orphanages near the mission center.<sup>17</sup> In time, the missionary became a leader in establishing orphanages, schools, hospitals and social service ministries. In the beginning, much of the missionary's teaching centered on phases of work which were peculiar to the Brethren heritage. Temperance, relief ministries, evangelism, the simple life and Bible study were most frequently stressed. When the Bulsar mission was organized in India in February, 1889, it was known as the "The First German Baptist Church."

In time, the mission field's needs compelled workers to adapt their methods to the demands of the new cultures. In America, expanding needs of the mission field required growing budgets and enlarged staffs. The first Annual Conference missionary offering was received in 1890 and the first consecration service for missionaries was conducted in 1901.

The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions was initiated in 1888 by John R. Mott. Under the impact of this movement, many students dedicated themselves to the work of home and foreign missions in the Church of the Brethren. The Annual Conference granted permission to the General Mission Board "to call young lay-brethren" to the foreign field (1911). College campuses across the brotherhood promoted interest in the mission field by forming United Student Volunteer bands. When the United States entered World War I, 413 young men and women on Brethren college campuses were pledged to undertake some form of service on behalf of missions.

As a center for education, the North Atlantic District has seen many young men and women enter the area for advanced work in the numerous colleges and universities. John M. Pittenger (1869-1966) and his wife, the former Florence Baker, resided in the district for a period of time after their retirement from the India mission field. Formerly a retiree after their retirement from the India mission field. Formerly a resident of Ohio, Bro. Pittenger graduated from Juniata College and Elizabethtown College he organized a *Missionary Reading Circle*

(June, 1904) to promote interest in the cause of missions. The Pittengers served in Ahwa, India, among the primitive Dang people from 1907 until 1919. When ill health forced their retirement from the field, they returned to the United States. The Pittengers were active for a number of years in the Germantown Church of the Brethren.

Another former missionary who served in the North Atlantic District was Quincy A. Holsopple (1885-1961). He and his wife, the former Kathren Royer, labored on the India mission field from 1912 until 1922. These enthusiastic workers shared their faith with members in pastorates at the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church (1926-1928) and the Royersford Church (1928-1937).

Paul S. Hoover (1916- ), a native of Middle Pennsylvania, prepared for a career in medical missions at the University of Pennsylvania. After his graduation from the university in 1948, he spent sixteen months of internship at the Philadelphia General Hospital where he worked in student health services. He and Mary Elizabeth Wentsler, of Western Pennsylvania, were married on August 23, 1947. In the period the Hoovers spent in preparation for their overseas assignment, they were also active in the Philadelphia First Church and in many district events. Paul S. Hoover was ordained to the eldership on July 17, 1949.

On October 13, 1951, the Hoovers sailed from New York City for Bombay, India. In the Surat District, close to Bombay, they ministered to the medical and spiritual needs of the people of India for the next five years. Their term of service was given during a period in which the entire mission program of the brotherhood was facing decisive change. The churches of the mission field were beginning to assert their strength and were claiming the right to have indigenous leadership.

One of the leading elders of the Church of the Brethren of India, Premchand G. Bhagat, made an extended tour of America on behalf of the denomination's mission program in 1950. He visited college campuses, Bethany Biblical Seminary, Brethren Service centers and numerous churches of the brotherhood in order to prepare himself for administrative and evangelistic leadership in India. In the North Atlantic District, he shared with the churches some insight into the mission field. When Bro. Bhagat returned to India early in 1951, he shared with the Golden Jubilee District Conference the understandings he acquired from his extensive tour of America.

### Work in China

In 1858, a series of treaties with western countries opened China to the influences of the western world and provided for the toleration of Christian missionaries. A party of five Brethren missionaries arrived in Shanghai on September 25, 1908, opening the way for a new mission field for the Church of the Brethren. It was the denomination's bicentennial year as Frank and Anna Crumpacker, George W. Hilton and his wife and Emma Horning opened the work in China.

Nine years later, Mary Schaeffer (1890- ), a native of Berks and Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, sailed for the China mission field.

Commissioned by the Wichita Annual Conference, she devoted herself to educational and evangelistic work in the Shansi Province. The name "Shansi" means "Mountain West", reflecting the rough terrain in which the missionaries first labored. For the next forty-three years, Mary Schaeffer dedicated her life as a career missionary to this large country. On those occasions when she was on furlough, she completed her educational work at Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. From 1942 to 1944, before returning to the China field, she worked as the church and Sunday School visitor for the Philadelphia First Church.

In 1924, Esther E. Kreps (1898- ) was appointed by the General Mission Board to the China mission field. A member of the Coventry Church of the Brethren, she united with the congregation in 1915. Her parents, George M. and Barbara Jane (Zook) Kreps, were active in the life of the Coventry congregation. Esther Kreps prepared for her duties on the mission field by attending Elizabethtown College (B.E., 1920), the Bellevue Hospital School of Nursing in New York City (R.N., 1923) and the White Bible Seminary of New York (1923). Her assignment took her to the Shansi Province where she was the supervisor of nursing in the Liao Chou Hospital (1925-1926).



*Esther E. Kreps*

Miss Kreps also held the position of supervisor of medicine and surgery in the Peking Union Medical Center (1926-1928). She wrote of her experiences in Peking, "It was the crossroads for a wonderful experience in living with all nationalities, including people from government, education, business and the Embassies."<sup>18</sup> At this early date, Japanese soldiers were infiltrating the Chinese capital and planes were often seen hedge-hopping over the ancient city. In 1931, the Japanese were invading China and Manchuria in the prelude to World War II.

After her return to America, Esther Kreps became supervisor and instructor of surgical nursing at the Bellevue Hospital School of Nursing in New York City (1929-1932). She became the supervisor and instructor of medical and surgical nursing at the West Chester School of Nursing, New York (1932-1944) and the Meadowbrook Hospital of Nassau County in Hempstead, New York (1940-1964). When she retired in December, 1964, she was honored by the Meadowbrook Hospital for her years of devotion to the nursing profession and for her unusual ability as an instructor.

Early in the spring of 1938, Edward Thomas Angeny (1914- ) was married to Helen Buehl. The son of William and Kate Krupp Angeny of the Bethany congregation in Philadelphia, he was called to the ministry by this Philadelphia church. Bro. Angeny had the privilege of baptizing his fiancee into the membership of the congregation seven days before their marriage. His wife is the daughter of Frank C. and Hester Baumiller Buehl of Jenkinstown, Pennsylvania.

In preparation for his work on the mission field, Bro. Angeny attended the Pennsylvania Bible Institute and the National Bible Institute of New York City. The Angenys graduated from Bethany Biblical Seminary with the class of 1939. After a year of pastoral work in the Woodworth Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio, they set sail for the China mission field in September, 1940. They were learning the Chinese language at Baguio in the Philippine Islands when war erupted in the Far East. The Angenys were among eight Brethren missionaries interned by the Japanese at Camp Holmes for a period of three years. No direct word was heard from them until late in 1944. When the American forces invaded the Philippines, these missionaries were relocated at Camp Bilibid near Manila. It was then that Bro. Angeny wrote concerning his experiences under Japanese internment,

"Our rations. . .were at first pretty good, but were gradually reduced in the last six months until there was nothing but rice, cracked corn and sweet potato leaves, and only enough of that to equal about 600 calories."<sup>19</sup>

Edward and Helen Angeny returned to America safely at the conclusion of the war. After a period of rest and visits with their families, they entered the pastoral ministry in Ohio.

#### African Mission Work

The World Missionary Conference was called in Edinburgh (1910) because the churches began to see the need for interdenominational co-

operation. The world mission of the church was confronted with such dimensions and difficulties that it could not be effective without a Christian strategy on the part of all the churches. At this conference, honest efforts were made to survey the needs of the world. These needs and strategies for meeting them were printed in nine researched volumes. One of the volumes described the region south of the Sahara desert as strategic in winning the tribes from animism to Christianity. In response to this new mission challenge, the Church of the Brethren began to look to the possibilities of an African mission.

In June, 1919, T. T. Myers delivered an address at the Winona Lake Annual Conference in which he predicted the opening of mission work in Africa. By 1920, the Sedalia Annual Conference passed the following resolution: "We ask Annual Conference to endorse the opening of a mission in Africa as soon as the way seems opened by the Spirit for us to do so."<sup>20</sup>

On November 20, 1920, seven Student Volunteer members met at the Philadelphia First Church. The group was composed of A. D. Helser, H. Stover Kulp, J. W. Barwick, Byron M. Sell, Linwood T. Geiger, Warren O. Garner and Foster B. Statler. This group represented Student Volunteer bands from Mt. Morris, Bethany, North Manchester, Blue Ridge and Juniata College. The group discussed the question: "What can we as volunteers do to deepen our own spiritual life and help others to find the Christ?" The group organized themselves with H. Stover Kulp as president and J. W. Barwick as secretary-treasurer.<sup>21</sup>

The conference of 1922 responded to a request from the North Atlantic District to appoint H. Stover and Ruth Royer Kulp as missionaries to the African continent. In addition, the conference appointed Albert D. Helser and Lola Bechtel to the new mission field.

Albert D. Helser and H. Stover Kulp journeyed to Africa ahead of their wives to select a site for the new mission. They sailed from America late in 1922 and made their way from the British Isles to Nigeria in British West Africa. By March 8, 1923, they sat astride the horses on which they traveled looking across the Hawal River Valley at the site they chose. A site at Garkida was consecrated on March 17, 1923, for the construction of the first mission compound.

Brethren Helser and Kulp began their work among the 85,000 Bura people in Northern Nigeria in truly pioneer fashion. They located 280 miles from the nearest railroad in a territory the size of the state of Indiana. They entered a province where Christian missionaries had not been permitted before and began to work among a people who had no written language. There was no one to assist them in learning the language. Bro. Kulp wrote later about these early experiences in a new land, "It is not easy for these people to turn their backs on the old customs and traditions to follow the new way."<sup>22</sup>

H. Stover Kulp (1894-1964) was native to East Coventry Township near Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where his parents, Aaron K. and Naomi Tyson Kulp, were active in the Coventry Church of the Brethren. While



*H. Stover Kulp*

he attended Juniata College (1915-1918), Stover's interest in missions was aroused. The years which followed were spent in preparation for his life's mission. He ministered as pastor of the New Enterprise Church of the Brethren (1918-1919) and as associate pastor (1919) and pastor (1920-1922) of the Philadelphia First Church. He attended the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1920 (M. A. degree).

On June 21, 1921, H. Stover Kulp married Ruth Royer (1896-1924), a Juniata classmate and a member of the Student Volunteer organization. Ruth was the fourth child of Galen B. Royer, who was active in the cause of missions for the Church of the Brethren. While her husband was searching for a mission center in Africa, Ruth studied in London, England (1922-1923), in preparation for a career in missions. She joined her husband late in 1923. Ruth was fatally stricken on June 15, 1924, when she gave birth to her first son. Before her death, she witnessed the beginnings of a Christian school and the earliest buildings of a mission compound. A small hospital in 1924 was named in her honor.

H. Stover Kulp courageously pioneered the African work with the assistance of Albert D. Helser who eventually became the director of the Sudan Interior Mission (1936). Homer L. Burke arrived from America to develop the medical program (1923-1938). Bro. Kulp labored as the evangelist, educator, translator and missionary secretary in West Africa. By 1925, he had completed the first Bura language primer.

In December, 1926, while he was engaged in language study in London, England, H. Stover Kulp married Christina Masterton (1896-1952), a native of Peebles, Scotland, and a missionary for the United Free Church of Scotland to Nuasaland (1922-1925). For a quarter of a century she served in Northern Nigeria with her husband as a teacher, a translator and a writer of Bura hymns. She lived at Lassa

(1926-1943) and Garkida (1943-1945). For a period of time she contributed articles in the Bura language to periodicals in Africa and co-authored a booklet for African women under the title, *Marriage*.<sup>23</sup> She once wrote about her ministry in Africa, "He has given us grace to plow and plant in His kingdom and we are made humble by the increases He has graciously given."

In 1963, H. Stover Kulp retired from the Nigerian mission field after more than forty years of Nigerian churchmanship. According to the tradition of honor among the African tribes, Bro. Kulp was robed in a beautiful blue and white Nigerian costume. Thirty churches of this African land sent representatives to the conference which honored "our father, teacher Kulp" in his retirement. H. Stover Kulp returned to America and attended his final Annual Conference at Lincoln, Nebraska (1964). At this conference he was chosen to bear a candle through the throng of worshippers to light an altar candle at the opening service. As Bro. Kulp approached the altar, the conference moderator offered an ascription in honor of all those workers and leaders of the Church of the Brethren who carried the light each in his own way.

Calvert N. Ellis, representing the Foreign Missions Commission of the brotherhood, visited the North Atlantic District in 1966. He invited churches and individuals to participate in the Stover Kulp Memorial Fund established to train leaders in the churches of Nigeria.

In 1942, John B. Grimley (1915- ) and Mildred Hess Grimley (1915- ) were approved by the Asheville Annual Conference for work in Nigeria. The son of Oliver K. and Sarah Bechtel Grimley, John was native to Norristown, Pennsylvania and was a member of the Green Tree Church of the Brethren. He was married on August 26, 1939 to Mildred May Hess of Collingswood, New Jersey.



John B. and Mildred H. Grimley

The war (1939-1945) prevented the Grimleys from entering the mission field until early in 1945. In order to arrive safely, they traveled to Nigeria by way of Central America, Peru, Argentina, Capetown, South Africa and Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo. The Grimleys were located at Lassa (1945-1948) and Gulak (1949). Their term of service extended from 1945 until 1966, during which time they served as pastor, evangelist, teachers and workers among the orphans. They served the people of the Higi, Margi, Chibuk and Fali tribes.

John B. Grimley co-authored a book concerning the mission work in Nigeria under the title, *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria* (1966). Mildred Grimley wrote a volume entitled, *Children of The Bush Country* (1959). The Grimleys have also contributed many articles to *The Gospel Messenger* concerning African life and customs.

Velva Jane Dick (1915-      ), a member of the Coventry Church of the Brethren, was approved in 1945 by the Annual Conference for work at the Garkida Hospital in Nigeria. The daughter of pastor Trostle P. and Annie Hollinger Dick, she was a graduate of the J. C. Blair Hospital School of Nursing (1938) and Ohio State University (1945). Velva Jane sailed for Africa in December, 1945 and spent the next fourteen years as a nurse in the hospital and leprosarium at Garkida.

In 1959, shortly after she began her fourth term as a missionary in Nigeria, she was riding a bicycle along a Nigerian road. When the bicycle struck a stone, she was thrown and suffered a broken hip in the fall. When her hip did not mend properly, she returned to the United States to become the head nurse at the Brethren Village in Neffsville, Pennsylvania.



*Velva Jane Dick*

In 1948, Bassey Minso, a native Nigerian minister, graduated from Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. Before returning to his native land in 1950, he visited many congregations of the brotherhood, including the Coventry Church of the Brethren.

From 1951 to 1954, Paul Walter Petcher (1922- ), a graduate of the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, directed the work of the Garkida Hospital and Leprosarium. During the period of his residence in Pennsylvania (1946-1948), he was active in the services of the Philadelphia First Church. He returned to his native Alabama where he spent a period of time in private medical practice. He returned to Nigeria in 1956 to assume the supervision of the sixty-bed hospital at Lassa. For the next four years, he was the only doctor in a population of a quarter of a million people.



*Paul W. Petcher*

Serving with Bro. Petcher on the mission field was his wife, Esther Mae (Wilson). The North Atlantic District Men's Fellowship cooperated with the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren in purchasing a Jeep station wagon (1952) for the use of the Petchers on the Nigerian mission.

Charles M. Bieber (1919- ) and Mary Elizabeth Bieber (1922- ) began their terms of service in Nigeria in 1950. Mary Elizabeth was a native of the North Atlantic District, the daughter of Lawrence R. and Mary F. High of Spring City. She united with the Church of the Brethren in 1932 at the Royersford Church. In 1944, she wed

Charles M. Bieber, formerly of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Bro. Bieber was ordained to the ministry in the Royersford Church (1946) and was commissioned to serve with Mary Elizabeth on the Nigerian field as a medical missionary and a pastor.



*Charles M. and Mary Elizabeth Bieber*

The Biebers arrived on the mission field in November, 1950, and continued their work until 1963. Charles served as the pastor of a church of 200 members. He was also engaged in educational and medical work at Garkida and Lassa. Mary Elizabeth served as the chairperson of the district Women's Work in Africa from 1960 to 1963. In 1968, Charles returned to Nigeria to minister in medical missions in the midst of the country's Civil War. The Biebers returned to Nigeria again to attend the Fiftieth Anniversary observance of Lardin Gabas (Church of the Brethren) in March, 1973.

Monroe Crouse Good and Ada Ziegler Good were consecrated at the Richmond Conference (1952) for service in the expanding Nigerian Church. Formerly pastor of the Quakertown Church of the Brethren, Bro. Good prepared for his work at Elizabethtown College, Eastern Baptist Seminary and Bethany Biblical Seminary. The Goods served at Marama and Shafa from 1952 until 1964, when ill health forced their retirement from mission work. Bro. and Sister Good have devoted themselves to the pastoral ministry in Maryland since their return from the Nigerian mission field.

Wilbur A. Martin (1914- ) and Evelyn Zuck Martin were active in the North Atlantic District for twenty-six years as church leaders. From 1957 until 1960, the Martins dedicated themselves to a tour of duty in Nigeria as the chaplain and house parents of the Hillcrest School for

children of missionaries. This school, located at Jos, was founded in 1941.

Churches of the district have given continuing support to the brotherhood program by sponsoring schools of missions, entertaining furloughed missionaries as guest leaders and pledging liberal financial gifts to the mission program. District Sunday Schools have supported Elnora Schechter, Philip and Naomi Kulp and Ruth L. Glessner on the African field. The Coventry congregation has undergirded the work of H. Stover Kulp and other overseas workers from its own membership during the past fifty years. The Green Tree Church has pledged regular contributions to the work of Clara Harper and the Royersford congregation has provided maintenance for William G. Kinzie, the son of a missionary to India. In the period from 1940 to 1945, district congregations pledged their gifts to the work of Edward and Helen Angeny on the China mission field.

### Work in Ecuador

The Coventry congregation voted in 1959 to share in the work of George M. Kreps (1931- ) and his family as missionaries to Ecuador. The son of John and Elizabeth Hess Kreps, George has been a member of the Coventry congregation from the age of twelve years. He was licensed (1953) and ordained (1955) to the Christian ministry in his home congregation. On June 12, 1954, he was married to Wilma Studebaker of Springfield, Ohio. In 1955, they were consecrated by the Annual Conference for work at the new site in South America.



*George and Wilma Kreps*

The General Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren decided in 1945 to pioneer a mission work in South America. The earliest missionaries went to Ecuador to build upon a witness which was begun earlier

by the Brethren Service Committee. George and Wilma Kreps arrived in Calderon in 1955 and dedicated themselves to educational, agricultural and health services in the region about Quito. Bro. Kreps labored as pastor at Llano Grande and Asczzubi. He was active in promoting a merger of independent churches into the United Evangelical Church of Ecuador. In the sixteen years the Kreps served on this mission field, they were busy in evangelistic work, agricultural extension services and village industrial promotion.

### The Nature of the Mission Program

The Church of the Brethren has been sponsoring overseas missions for nearly a century. This period has been a time of incredible change in the church. In no small measure, the mission movement has been one of the catalysts of change. The congregations have become more institutional, with heavy budgetary requirements in order to undergird the many new programs instituted by the denomination. Cooperative ministries and contacts with new cultures have required a broadening of theological positions. The Church of the Brethren, once content to be parochial in outlook, has been forced to rethink its mission in world terms. These changes are having continuing repercussions in the denomination.

The mission movement was one of the conspicuous expressions of the universal nature of the Christian faith. In the late 1800s, many churchmen began to realize that a purely sectarian approach to Christianity was detrimental to its future expansion and effectiveness. Interdenominational conferences were held, beginning in New York in 1854, and eventually expanding into international conferences. The word "ecumenical" was first used at the interdenominational conference of 1900 in New York City.<sup>24</sup> By 1910, the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh gave expression to the conviction that "God's Church is one and man's church is divided." These conferences prepared the way for greater cooperation between competing Christian groups and led to a fuller expression of the church's universal message.

V. F. Schwalm once outlined the changes which have come into the mission program of the denomination.<sup>25</sup> The missionary began as a preacher of light to people who were walking in darkness. Soon he became a pioneer of educational, agricultural and medical missions as he tried to improve the social and physical life of the people. In time, the study of comparative religions, has given rise to a greater tolerance and understanding between the various faiths of the world. Today, high-minded leaders of many religious groups seek to cooperate in an endeavor to build a brotherhood on earth deserving the loyalty of all religious groups.

Thrust into new cultural settings, the Church of the Brethren has seen the need for a continuous re-expression of its own religious faith. Leaders have been searching for the vital essence of the Christian faith and have discarded what has proven to be only ephemeral and passing.

The Church of the Brethren in the 1960s began to say, “The age of missions is at an end and the age of mission has begun.” Members were challenged to rethink their faith so that their work in the world became a matter of partnership in a total mission. Repeatedly the church has been told that people will turn from the church if it continues to be concerned only about itself.

Finally, the mission program helped the church to discover that it has another work beyond proselytizing people of other faiths. Helping people to find new life in Christ remains the first great work of the church. Beyond the making of people into Christians lies the church’s responsibility to offer pure service “without money and without price.” The church must serve the world’s needs without thought of any benefit to itself.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE DISTRICT AND ITS SERVICE MINISTRIES

Brethren Service is a new name but the spirit is as old as the brotherhood. Long before 1941, when the term "Brethren Service" was formally given a permanent place in the church organization, the North Atlantic District honored Christopher Saur as "the Good Samaritan of Germantown." Many modern Good Samaritans have come from this district to support the church's expanding ministries to the world. The district which honored Andrew Boni and John Naas as early conscientious objectors produced modern churchmen who have stood in the tradition of these noble pioneers. Alexander Mack, the founder of the church and an eighteenth century resident of Germantown, set an example in relief ministries by sharing his substance with the needy and the distressed.

The European movements which worked toward the renewal of the church tried to restore the original spirit of New Testament Christianity. Pietism, Anabaptism and the Brothers' movements of earlier centuries turned the attention of the church from liturgical expression to a practical, creative Christianity. "From the beginning, our people believed that religion was to be an affair of daily life", said Charles D. Bonsack.<sup>1</sup> This warm-hearted Christianity in the Church of the Brethren had a strong basis in Christian ethics. Early Brethren believed that life is to be measured by the kind of fruit it produces. This approach to Christian faith required that it must eventually penetrate all areas of human life.

Some contemporary Brethren leaders have expressed the conviction that the renewal of the church will come when it returns to the qualities associated with its sectarian stages of growth.<sup>2</sup> The sense of community, the concept of servanthood, the stewardship of life and possessions, the commitment to the peaceful life and a deep-seated compassion for human need have been marks of the Church of the Brethren in the past and present hope for the church of the future. From these roots the church must find strength to confront its crisis-prone world with significantly new ministries.

#### Confronting The World

The Church of the Brethren once approached *The World* with reluctance. At the turn of the century, a few voices were heard appealing to the membership to be bold in confronting the world. Such an appeal was made in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, by J. T. Myers, a resident of the North Atlantic District. He felt that the time had come for the church to be better known to the world for its peace position:

"Why should we put our light as a church under a bushel? The day has come when we ought to assert ourselves and make ourselves known. . .We have not come before the world as we ought to come

before the world to make ourselves felt. We are not answering our purposes and mission as a church of Jesus Christ. Let us go before the world and make ourselves felt and let it be known just where we stand and why we stand for the principles we hold true."<sup>3</sup>

A major part of the denomination's service ministries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was directed toward other Brethren. There have, of course, been a few notable exceptions, some of these in the North Atlantic District. The bicentennial history of the Coventry Church of the Brethren contains this notation:

"It is recorded in local history that Revolutionary soldiers were cared for in a barn in the Coventry area. We are certain that Brethren followed the Christian ideal of helping anyone in need or distress."<sup>4</sup> During the same Revolutionary War period, other Brethren raised provisions and hauled wagon loads of grain to camps for starving soldiers in the Philadelphia area.<sup>5</sup>

The twentieth century introduced a changing world outlook and an expanding service program to the Church of the Brethren. Church benevolence was directed toward famine relief in India (1900) and China (1908). President William McKinley sounded a keynote for the twentieth century when he said, "God and man have linked the nations together. The period of exclusiveness is past."<sup>6</sup> The period of exclusiveness for the Church of the Brethren was also past. Members could no longer read of a crop failure in India or an earthquake in Chile without sensing the need for positive action.

### A Changing Church Structure

The developing social ethic of the Brethren is reflected in their changing church structure. In the first one hundred and fifty years of the brotherhood's existence, church administration was far less formal and structured than it is today. It evolved from a loosely-knit fraternalism in the eighteenth century to a corporate structure with vested interests in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, when the nation witnessed the rise of numerous organizations to promote social reform, members of the Church of the Brethren saw no need to organize to promote temperance and peace. The brotherhood considered itself a temperance and peace society. As late as 1902, when the Huntingdon Church of Pennsylvania requested the creation of a peace committee, the Conference responded that there was no need for such a Committee since every member of the brotherhood ought to witness for peace. From 1890 until 1911, there was little formal teaching concerning peace within the denomination.

The church began to assume its modern organization with the creation of the Domestic and Foreign Missions Board (1880). A major step toward the institutional church was made in 1908 when the denomination changed its name from "Fraternity of German Baptists" to "Church of the Brethren." In this same year, the General Educational

Board and a brotherhood Temperance Committee were formed. A General Sunday School Board was created in 1911 to succeed the original Sunday School Advisory Committee (1896). By 1914, the Sunday School Board assumed the work formerly conducted by the Christian Workers' Society.

Through the multiplication of committees and boards the church was able to extend its ministry to *The World*. Missions, education, peace and temperance continued to hold prominent places in the teaching and preaching ministry of the local congregation. One of the early actions of the brotherhood Peace Committee was an appeal to the United States government for national funds to be appropriated for "the relief of suffering humanity throughout the war zones, without respect to race, religion or nationality."<sup>8</sup>

District personnel were involved in the denomination's encounter with *The World*. During World War I (1914-1918), D. W. Kurtz, J. Kurtz Miller and M. C. Swigart were active on various brotherhood committees and boards. M. C. Swigart was appointed to a committee to study the relationship of Brethren to labor unions (1913-1915). D. W. Kurtz served for many years as a member and as chairman of the General Education Board. J. Kurtz Miller was chairman of the brotherhood Peace Committee in 1916 and 1917.

The service aspect of the church's life began to appear in the face of the dire needs of a world at war. A special Annual Conference, meeting in Goshen, Indiana (January 9, 1918), authorized a Central Service Committee to succeed the Peace Committee. The new committee, although it was only temporary (1918-1921), prepared the way for the church's protests against national military drafts, made possible the church's cooperation with other peace-minded groups and opened the channels of communication between the church and the national government.

The Goshen Conference also appointed a special War Relief and Reconstruction Work Committee. This new body was mandated to find ways by which the Brethren could do relief and reconstruction work and to solicit funds for these projects. One of the earliest projects was Armenian and Syrian relief work. The Church of the Brethren had a deep interest in the persecuted Armenian Christians since the denomination conducted a mission in Turkey up until 1917. Several Armenian Christians toured the brotherhood and visited the churches of the North Atlantic District on behalf of Armenian relief.

When members of the Germantown Church heard an account of the sufferings of the Armenians, they pledged \$209 for assistance.<sup>9</sup> In 1917, the Standing Committee of the Annual Conference appealed to all congregations to unite in their support of this relief work. In the months which followed, the churches responded with an amazing outpouring of funds.<sup>10</sup>

A. J. Culler, the former pastor of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church (1911-1914), was appointed by the brotherhood to direct relief work in the Near East on behalf of the denomination. From March,

1919, until January, 1920, he labored with the American Committee for Relief in the Near East. In the region about Marash, Turkey, his ministries were credited with saving the lives of many children. The former district pastor wrote to the Brethren in America, "When there are refugees thousands of miles from their homes and without food, clothing or shelter, they need the strong arm of a friend to help."<sup>11</sup>

Maynard L. Cassady, who ministered briefly at the Pottstown Church (1923), was in Europe in 1923 and 1924 as a student. He consented to act on behalf of the Relief Committee to distribute food and clothing. Bro. Cassady wrote to the Brethren in America,

"The people live on roots of all kinds, mostly radishes and turnips cooked in plain water. We shall probably never know how much these people have suffered. A number of the students are fed only one meal a day by various families who can afford to undertake this work."<sup>12</sup>

In 1923, the Sisters' Aid Society of the brotherhood gave \$6,125.22 for the relief of the poor and starving in Germany.

The Church of the Brethren was unprepared to confront the massive needs of the war years. Temporary service committees were formed and disbanded a few years later. The Central Service Committee benefitted by cooperating with other church service agencies. Chief among these was the American Friends Service Committee with headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A small group of representative Quakers came from many parts of the nation in 1917 to establish within the Quaker fellowship a kind of service which was consistent with the Quaker testimony against all war. This new agency provided a stimulus to a satisfied and prosperous membership and became the means by which the Quakers offered a constructive, nonmilitary contribution to the world. The American Friends Service Committee was formed just twenty-four days after the United States declared war on Germany.

### Clarifying the Church's Peace Principles

From the time of its origins in the early eighteenth century, the Church of the Brethren has been a peace society. D. W. Kurtz, in his "Ideals of the Church of the Brethren", asserted that the doctrine of peace was one of the original principles of the founders of the church.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly enough, the earliest reasoned statement of the denomination's peace position was not made until early in 1918 when the denomination met in a special conference at Goshen, Indiana. Earlier statements were characteristically short and firm, precisely given in a sentence or two. In 1899, the church said: "Since we are inclined to peace and a defenseless state, it would in no wise be proper nor allowable for Brethren to learn war."<sup>14</sup> The paper of 1918, drawn up in the face of world crisis, disavowed war as "wrong and entirely incompatible with the spirit, example and teachings of Jesus Christ."<sup>15</sup>

In response to a request from the Harmonyville Church for a complete statement of the church's position on peace, the Peace Committee

of the brotherhood in 1924 formulated an extensive statement of the church's philosophy of peace.<sup>16</sup> Several factors led to the writing of this statement. In the first place, the threat of enforced military training in the public school systems of the nation was very real. As early as July 13, 1916, when a special committee of the Church of the Brethren conferred with President Wilson, W. J. Swigart expressed the concern of the Brethren about "the agitation and cry for enforced military training. . . and we especially desire that such enforced training should not be introduced into the public schools."<sup>17</sup>

Martin G. Brumbaugh became an active proponent of a Congressional bill to introduce physical education into the nation's public schools. He believed the bill was educationally sound and would spare the nation the undesirable conditions which enforced military training would bring. The former Pennsylvania Governor lectured widely on the subject, proposing it as a proper substitute measure for the National Service Act which would bring military training.<sup>18</sup>

In the second place, the Brethren formalized their peace convictions into a statement at a time of rising national sentiment against war. During the nation's involvement in World War I, actual peace activities on the part of churches and peace groups were minimal. Following the war, many groups formed blocs in opposition to war-making policies. Opposition to war, once based chiefly on religious injunctions, was broadened to include social concerns. There was a general awakening among churchmen to the church's responsibilities to contribute to a changed social order. In 1921, the Church of the Brethren appealed to President Warren G. Harding to adopt measures leading to world disarmament. Martin G. Brumbaugh was instrumental in channeling the letter to the President. Other church groups, including the Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists, joined the Society of Friends, the Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren in opposing war.

In 1922, the Church of the Brethren represented at the Washington Disarmament Conference. J. M. Henry, of New Windsor, Maryland, and John S. Noffsinger, moderator of the Brooklyn First Church, were denominational delegates at this conference in which nations met for the first time to reduce their war-making powers.

In the third place, the difficult experiences of the church during World War I made necessary a total philosophy toward the government, war and nonresistance. The Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917, permitted exemption from military duty for conscientious objectors provided they were members of "any well-recognized religious sect or organization whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form." Conscientious objectors were often harshly treated during World War I just as the Quakers had been mistreated during the Revolutionary War. Local draft boards referred conscientious objectors to military authorities. Frequently noncombatant personnel experienced difficulty in securing exemption from military duty. In order to certify that persons were members of the Church of

the Brethren, the Brethren Publishing House issued certificates to assist members with the draft.

The Goshen Conference (January 9, 1918) issued a very strong set of resolutions against war and asked for a fair application of the provision concerning the rights of conscientious objectors. "In some cases, religion and religious convictions have been subjected to contempt and ridicule", the paper stated.<sup>19</sup> Persons who were confined to detention camps by reason of their religious convictions were absolutely without employment. The paper went on to suggest to President Woodrow Wilson:

"We earnestly and humbly pray the President of the United States to assign us to our noncombatant duties in agriculture and peaceful industries, where loyal and valuable service to our country may be rendered without violence to conscience and in a way that will avoid the unhappy confusion in camps. . ." <sup>20</sup>

The Brethren of World War I knew that peace would not come with folded hands. While the War Department searched for a general policy to handle conscientious objectors, the church appealed to the government for the right to be active and creative in conformity to conscience. The special Goshen Conference inaugurated a program of camp visitation by selected Brethren visitors. In late 1917, M. C. Swigart, who was chosen by the district meeting to look after the interests of Brethren servicemen, visited Camp Meade, Camp Mills and Camp Merritt.

The District Service Committee reported to the district the results of its labors in April, 1919:

"Dear Brethren,

We wish to express our debt of gratitude to you for your help financially in making it possible to bring encouragement to so many of our Brethren who have been called from peaceful homes and a nonresistant faith to a life of drill in the military world.

Your committee has done the best it could under the circumstances. In our work, eighteen different training camps and two United States hospitals were visited, some of these camps many times. A number of sermons were preached, one lovefeast was held, much pastoral work was done, a great deal of personal work and a voluminous correspondence carried on all the time.

J. A. Long, Chairman  
M. C. Swigart, Secretary-Treasurer  
W. E. Root, Pastor."

### Increasing Cooperative Ministries

By 1917-1918, a new idealism spread across America. Many groups banded together for common causes, many of them to form sentiments for peace and internationalism. It appeared for a time that the nation might be permanently enlisted in the struggle to make the world less an arena for war and more a field for cooperative endeavors.

Many people became convinced that a true community of people could be formed.

When the Church of the Brethren began to appeal to the United States government for recognition as a peace church, the problem of church divisions began to trouble the spokesmen for the church. W. J. Swigart appealed to the 1917 Annual Conference for cooperation with other peace-loving churches. He argued that it is not very consistent to ask for exemption from military service on the grounds that the membership is peace-loving if there are dissensions so that the church cannot live peacefully with others. The Annual Conference granted two delegates who met with representatives from the Quakers and the Mennonites as they appealed to the government for exemption from military duty. A joint meeting of representatives from the Friends, Mennonites and Brethren met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on February 24, 1919, to consider action with reference to the proposed military training act in the state of Pennsylvania.

Members of the Church of the Brethren gradually changed their views concerning the mission of the church in the world. Leaders began to declare boldly that beyond the institutional purpose of adding to its own membership was the need to deal constructively with the relationships in which people were involved. The editor of *The Gospel Messenger* summed up the change when he wrote in 1920:

"We have been gripped by a new sense of responsibility toward the social and spiritual situation, both in our immediate environment and throughout the whole world. . . We are sharing in the general awakening that is seizing the churches of Christendom, and we are feeling more strong than ever before that the Church of the Brethren must make a worthy contribution to the great cause of world evangelization."<sup>21</sup>

### The Church's Response To An Age of Crisis

The air was full of crisis talk in the 1930s. Men spoke of peace and disarmament in the 1920s, but the succeeding decades were filled with "wars and rumours of wars." Nations began to arm at a rate unparalleled in all earlier history. Martin G. Brumbaugh made an impassioned plea for cooperation with other groups on behalf of the peace movement. He said,

"Would it not be wise to federate with these? Some may fear we would lose by doing so. I have no such fear, for if the principles of Jesus are promoted by the church He will care for us as He always does care for His own. Think about it. Pray about it. Perhaps then we will do something about it."<sup>22</sup>

A bloody and relentless war erupted in Spain in 1936. The Church of the Brethren, represented by Florence F. Murphy, M. R. Zigler and Dan West, met with representatives of the Friends and the Mennonites in Philadelphia to seek for ways to minister to the needs of the Spanish people. Immediate steps were taken to feed and clothe the mothers and

children who were victims of the Spanish Civil War. Dan West responded to a request to give time in administering food and clothing to people on both sides of the lines of conflict. An official of the Spanish ministry of Education observed, "There are things that pesetas cannot buy since they do not exist in Spain. These are precisely the things that the children need most---milk and soap."<sup>23</sup>

This nonpartisan ministry was the church's way of extending its peace witness into areas beyond its own denominational life. It was an apprenticeship by which the Church of the Brethren became involved in greater ministries to the world. Florence F. Murphy observed concerning this shared ministry with other peace groups, "A door has been opened toward further and future service as a natural outcome of the world already done."<sup>24</sup> In April, 1938, Lucille West visited the North Atlantic District and shared some of the experiences of her exciting ministry in Spain.



*Florence F. Murphy*

Brethren peace strategy began to take a radical turn in the 1930s. Prior to this decade, the church was chiefly interested in keeping its members out of involvement in war. In 1936, however, the brotherhood adopted a positive peace strategy to encourage its members to assist in alleviating sufferings caused by war. The church boldly declared that it wanted its peace stance known to the world.

The Annual Conference appointed a Committee on Counsel For Conscientious Objectors with authority to educate, counsel and defend Brethren with respect to their status as conscientious objectors. The committee was composed of Rufus D. Bowman, Paul H. Bowman, Sr., F. S. Carper, C. Ray Keim, M. R. Zigler, Dan West and Ross D. Murphy. In one of its early pronouncements (1936), the committee suggested the kinds of services which are consistent with the peace position of the church. These services included overseas relief work under

civilian or church jurisdiction in cooperation with other church groups; creative work in the nation in the form of house construction, road-building, farming and forestry; and work in hospitals or community recreation projects.

When World War II began in 1939 in Europe, the Church of the Brethren girded itself to meet the needs of the world as well as those of its own members. An Advisory Committee for Conscientious Objectors, consisting of Paul H. Bowman, Sr., Ross D. Murphy and M. R. Zigler, was constituted in June, 1940. The committee encouraged churches and districts to appoint draft counselors. When the district Elders' body met in the Green Tree Church in August, 1940, it selected W. S. Price as the district Counselor for Conscientious Objectors.

In the face of the world crisis, the brotherhood called a special meeting of the Standing Committee in Chicago, Illinois on December 18-19, 1940. In these two critical days of decision, the brotherhood chose to embark on a program which would provide alternative service for young men and women who could not conscientiously serve in the nation's armed forces. In taking this bold step, the church preserved the right to remain a peace church and allied itself with other historic peace churches who resisted war and its attendant evils. B. F. Waltz and Ross D. Murphy represented the North Atlantic District in the historic Chicago meeting. The Annual Conference of 1941 approved the action of the special Standing Committee meeting and a Brethren Service Committee was appointed as the agency to administer Civilian Public Service work for the denomination.

On October 11, 1940, the work of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors was inaugurated. This new organization located its offices in Washington, D. C., in order to defend the interests of conscientious objectors before the United States government. At the time of its origins, the N S B R O served the interests of the American Friends Service Committee, the Brethren Service Committee, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Mennonite Central Committee. Eventually, many other church and peace groups allied themselves with the board to serve the interests of their objectors. After December 19, 1940, when President Roosevelt agreed to a plan whereby conscientious objectors could do work of national importance in lieu of military duty, the National Service Board coordinated the work of the various cooperating agencies.

In spite of the opposition to it, the Selective Service Act of 1940 represented a milestone in the struggle for civil liberties. The United States Congress and the Roosevelt administration were receptive to the suggestion that conscientious objectors should be separated from army responsibilities. Representatives of the historic peace churches pioneered alternative service programs. They helped to establish Civilian Public Service camps which were free from military supervision. Under the control of the church, and with the consent of the government, conscientious objectors helped to reforest barren lands, control soil erosion, fight forest fires, eradicate the hookworm in south-

ern communities and rehabilitate distressed settlements. A reconstruction work, called the Martin G. Brumbaugh Reconstruction Unit, was inaugurated at Castaner, Puerto Rico in 1942. In the years which followed, Civilian Public Service work expanded into special units in various communities of the nation. Dairy herd testers were used extensively. Community recreation projects were begun in the United States, in South America and in some European countries.

Some district pastors were chosen to be visitors to men in the armed services. Ross D. Murphy, B. F. Waltz and Caleb W. Bucher made visits to servicemen in the Philadelphia area and to the various veterans' hospitals of the district.

In 1944, Clayton H. Gehman appealed to the churches of the district to support the various Brethren Service ministries. "Our C. P. S. camps are still in need of food. More churches should participate in this activity", he wrote.<sup>25</sup> The number of youth who entered Civilian Public Service camps from the district was small. In this respect, the district followed the pattern which developed across the brotherhood. Merlin C. Shull, who surveyed the brotherhood's response to World War II, showed that eighty and one-half per cent of the members of the Church of the Brethren who were drafted entered the armed forces of the nation. Eleven per cent who were drafted entered noncombatant service and eight and one-half per cent went into Civilian Public Service work.<sup>26</sup> Many churches of the district, however, responded to the plea for food, clothing, magazines and books for C. P. S. camps.

A former district pastor, W. Harold Row (1912-1971), was called in 1942 to give full time direction to the Brethren Civilian Public Service program. When he began this work, the brotherhood had 1,036 men in eight camps scattered across the nation. In succeeding years, Bro. Row served as the Associate Secretary (1946-1948) and the Executive Secretary (1948-1968) of the Brethren Service Committee and the Director for International Services (1969-1971).

In 1969, W. Harold Row had an unique opportunity to witness for the peace position of the Church of the Brethren during a tour of Russia. At Zagorst, newsmen raised the question in an interview about the peace position of the church he represented. What followed is related by Leona Zigler Row:

"Harold told of the peace churches' struggles for the right to hold the conscientious objector position and how the American officials finally awarded the right to claim this position in times of war. He related that the peace churches had not only received this right for their own members but that a national office for all religious objectors was set up in Washington. He spoke of the positive witness for peace as he saw young men and women doing alternative service work instead of killing in war-time or instead of supporting the national war-machinery."<sup>27</sup>

In addition to this testimony, Bro. Row was invited in this same year to deliver a ten-minute sermon at Yalta. At the request of the Russian Orthodox bishop, he spoke concerning the peace witness of the Church

of the Brethren during a three-hour liturgy. At the conclusion of the service he was presented with a bouquet of flowers.

The material aid ministries of the Church of the Brethren in the beginning years was centered in Philadelphia. The American Friends Service Committee, with a quarter of a century of experience in relief ministries, made space available for the Brethren in a storeroom on Cherry Street in central Philadelphia. Florence F. Murphy accepted the call from the brotherhood to act as a liaison person between the Brethren Service Committee and the American Friends Service Committee. From 1938 until 1945, she directed the work with the help of volunteer young people. On many occasions, she hosted tours of the center for visiting Brethren groups.

Regular reports were made to the brotherhood out of the Philadelphia center. Early in 1941, Florence F. Murphy wrote concerning the contributions of the churches:

"The readers of *The Messenger* will be interested to know that the Brethren Service Committee, in cooperation with the American Friends Service Committee, has received and packed about 110,000 lbs. of clothing during the year 1940. Of this amount, about 45,000 lbs have come from members of the Church of the Brethren with an estimated valuation of \$40,000."<sup>28</sup>

In 1942, about 20,000 lbs. of relief clothing, valued at \$15,000, was channeled by the Brethren through the Philadelphia center. When the Church of the Brethren opened its own center at New Windsor, Maryland (1943), churches began to direct their relief materials to this new site.

The North Atlantic District formed its own Brethren Service Committee in 1941 to promote support for the expanding ministries of the denomination. The district had its own projects, including a carload of wheat, seeds for European gardens, special C. P. S. packets for young men in American camps, Christmas packages for overseas shipments, and candle collections. Many of the district churches also engaged in a Bible project and funds were gathered for the distribution of Bibles in European lands. M. R. Zigler was guest of the district at a mass meeting in the Philadelphia First Church in April, 1947, at which time he spoke of the needs of various European countries. Through the efforts of the Brethren Service Committee, giving for various service projects increased from \$2,200.72 in 1941-1942 to \$7,549.95 in 1947-1948.

The district Brethren Service Committee was most active in the period from 1941 until 1955. During these crucial war- and postwar years, the following district personnel served on the committee: Gertrude Alderfer, Clayton H. Gehman, Elmer Q. Gleim, Anna Glessner, Eloise Hanawalt, Mary F. High, Floy S. Hoffer, John R. Justice, D. Howard Keiper, C. Rudolph Kulp, Marian Landis, Wilbur A. Martin, John C. Middlekauff, Glen E. Norris, D. Alfred Replogle and Harper M. Snavely.

## Overseas Workers

During World War II and the following years, many former district personnel served in overseas assignments on behalf of Brethren Service. John W. Barwick, a former pastor of the Bethany Church of the Brethren, volunteered to do work among prisoners of war in England (1940). Although he was sponsored by the Y. M. C. A., he was partially supported by regular contributions from the Brethren Service Committee of the brotherhood. Early in 1945, Bro. Barwick was joined by Luther H. Harshbarger who resigned his Ambler pastorate to work among German and Italian prisoners interned in England.

Bro. Harshbarger wrote to the Brethren in America concerning his experiences:

"Never in my life have I had so many requests for Bibles and New Testaments in languages other than English for men who are clearly seeking for a way by which to live. Unfortunately, up till now, we have been able to supply them with abysmally small quantities, forty Bibles for 20,000 men. This appalling situation cannot continue if the Christian Church hopes to gain a foothold in Europe. No missionary in darkest Africa ever had a greater opportunity."<sup>29</sup>

Mark C. Ebersole, a former district youth worker, was employed by the Brethren Service Committee to supervise work in Italy at the close of the war. He labored with other Brethren workers in Italy in association with the American Friends representatives and with the support of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). By 1947, the work in Italy changed from reconstruction work to the development of a children's community center. In addition, Bro. Ebersole was responsible for the distribution of material aid and heifer donations.

In 1948, M. R. Zigler was assigned to serve as the Church of the Brethren representative in Europe. He established headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Dorothy Jones, a member of the Bethany Church of the Brethren, entered Brethren Volunteer Service in this same year and was assigned to the Geneva office as the secretary to Bro. Zigler. Brethren Volunteer Service used young men and women in a wide variety of ministries, including the processing of clothing for relief, counseling in churches and community centers, secretarial work in various church-related services, and health and rehabilitation work. In 1950, there were 132 Brethren Volunteer workers in projects in the United States and Europe. Dorothy Jones returned to America in 1950 and addressed the annual spring rally for women concerning the wide range of ministries undertaken by the Church of the Brethren in Europe.

The germ of the work camp idea was formed in the last days of World War I. In 1918, selected conscientious objectors were furloughed from prisons and farms to the American Friends Service Committee for training in reconstruction work overseas. Work camps were initiated by the Society of Friends in Europe following World War I and in America in the year 1934. These camps provided opportunities for young people

to test the efficacy of their faith in peace as a way of life and to experiment with cooperative methods of social change. The North Atlantic District used the work camp programs at Willow Grove (1945), Pottstown (1955) and Wilmington (1956).

Jacob T. Dick and his family, former district residents, sailed for Germany in June, 1952, to administer Brethren Volunteer Service programs in Europe and to conduct European work camps. With headquarters at Kassel, Germany, he spent three years directing international work camps. He wrote concerning the value of this ministry:

"The dignity of manual labor, a keen awareness of social responsibility, international understanding at the 'grass roots' levels, and breaking down old barriers which divide people are still features of international work camps." <sup>30</sup>

Ora Huston, the brotherhood peace counselor, visited the North Atlantic District in 1948 to speak of peace in association with the Advance With Christ movement. He spoke at a peace forum in the Green Tree congregation where ministers and Sunday School workers gathered to discuss the various phases of the Selective Service and Alternative Service programs (October 21, 1948). Bro. Huston claimed that it was his purpose to build conviction into members of the church so that they would not be swayed by changing circumstances in their world.

Many churches of the district provided volunteer "seagoing cow-boys" for cattle and horse shipments. Men between the ages of eighteen and fifty years were invited to attend the shipment of animals to European countries. Each cattle attendant received board, room and \$150 for the sixty-day round-trip. The idea of sending heifers to needy people was born in the mind of Dan West when he was on a relief mission to Spain (1938).

Congregational histories in this volume relate the response on the part of many district churches to the heifer project. Much of the credit for the success of the program lies with local groups of laymen who collected money, tested cattle and prepared them for overseas shipment. These animals were purchased from funds raised by Vacation Bible Schools, church school classes, youth groups and private contributions.

The Coventry congregation provided three volunteers for a shipment of horses to the Mediterranean lands. Richard Swavely, Harold Bean and Walter Keen sailed on the cargo vessel, *Zona Gale*, from the port of New York in July, 1945. Clarence Rosenberger, a member of the Germantown Church, was the leader of the Brethren livestock attendants on the ship and was chaplain for the group.

The Ambler congregation not only purchased heifers but also provided volunteers for some of the overseas shipments. Paul Henning and Donald Rummel, who later became pastor of the congregation, accompanied a shipment of ninety-eight heifers to Greece.

Edgar H. Grater, of the Norristown congregation, was the leader of a group of volunteer cattle attendants who set sail from New Orleans, Louisiana, in August, 1945, on the *S. S. Samuel H. Walker*. He was

very deeply moved by the hunger which he saw while he was abroad. He later described his experience,

“. . . I dressed hurriedly and found myself on the way to the mess hall. I didn’t enjoy the meal very much. I was not accustomed to having hungry faces looking through the porthole. . . . Every time I looked up I met a new pair of eyes looking in hungrily. . . .”<sup>31</sup>

### The Servant Ministry of the Church

The 1950s were called the decade of “the homeless man.” The war years uprooted whole races and classes of people, forcing them to look for new homes. Many of these people came to America, accepted into the homes and congregations of members of the Church of the Brethren. Brethren families of the North Atlantic District provided funds, homes, jobs and fellowship for people of Europe until they acclimated themselves to the new world of America. The interest in the Refugee Resettlement Program ran high in the district. In 1954, Helena Kruger visited the district meeting to relate to the delegates the nature of the program.

In recent decades, the Church of the Brethren has fearlessly spoken its mind on behalf of civil liberties. In 1944, the brotherhood located a hostel for Japanese-Americans in Brooklyn, New York, to assist in the rehabilitation of these people who were uprooted because of war-time restrictions.<sup>32</sup> In more recent years, the denomination has made funds available to minority groups to assist them in developing new communities, new homes and new recreational and educational facilities. In 1971, the Fund For The Americas allocated \$2,000 for the Afro-American Federation of Germantown to assist black youth in becoming functional members of their communities. In 1972, the Brethren gave \$2,000 to the Northwest Tenant Organization of Germantown to assist minority people.

The North Atlantic District has been the center for an unique fellowship experience. The Philadelphia area is the only location in the nation where members of the four historic peace churches live. Within a span of fifty years at the beginning of the commonwealth, the Society of Friends (1681), Mennonites (1683), Church of the Brethren (1719) and Schwenkfelders (1731) settled in the Philadelphia area. During the tension-filled years of World War II, these four groups began to associate in a fellowship which met twice each year.

In 1937, leaders of the Schwenkfelders, Mennonites, Society of Friends and Church of the Brethren met for the first of a continuing series of sharing and worship experiences. The four church groups, having a common heritage in the Pietistic movement, also share the peace ideal. The fellowships meet in turn at one of the church houses and are led in worship in the manner of the host church. When the peace fellowship met in the Coventry Church of the Brethren (July 4, 1942), pastor Trostle P. Dick read a historical paper on the development of the Coventry congregation. Visiting churchmen said that the background was so similar to their own that they could have told their own

denominational history by substituting names at almost every step of the account.<sup>33</sup>

When a Draft Act passed the United States Congress in the summer of 1948, the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren was in session at Colorado Springs. The delegate body heard impassioned pleas from youth for the inauguration of a volunteer program to provide alternative service to the draft. By autumn, Brethren Volunteer Service was begun in a trail-blazing venture which has provided many unique experiences in peace-making for youth and adults alike. By 1970, 2,913 youth and adults of the brotherhood volunteered time and talent in hundreds of ministries on behalf of peace. Workers have ministered in migrant camps, Indian reservations, overseas village rehabilitation projects, refugee relief endeavors, homes for the aged and city ghetto projects.

Kermit Eby once remarked to a brotherhood gathering, "A man with a Brethren heritage cannot escape involvement with the larger world if he takes his heritage seriously."<sup>34</sup> In a similar vein of thought, the Brethren who met in the Germantown Church for the 250th anniversary observance recited a litany in which they asked deliverance from

"any bowing at old altars that would keep us from building new ones, from any satisfaction in past achievements which would keep us from seeing new opportunities and from any identification with the glories of our fathers which would keep us from serving our generation as they served theirs."<sup>35</sup>

W. Harold Row once described Brethren Service as the third great work of the church, preceded only by missions and Christian nurture.<sup>36</sup> As late as 1959, the brotherhood expressed its desire to continue Brethren Service and to enlarge its outreach ministry. It is this ministry which has marked the Church of the Brethren as "the Servant Church." All of its ministries are performed in the spirit of Christ and its service ministries are integrated with other phases of the church program.

A program of disaster service was approved by the General Brotherhood Board in November, 1956. This action followed hard on the heels of the destructive hurricane which struck the east coast of the United States in 1955. Churches of the North Atlantic District responded to these natural emergencies by making financial sacrifices and by sending volunteer workers into areas of dire need. In 1972, the district was struck by heavy flooding along the Schuylkill and its tributaries. Churches of the district responded heroically to the emergency, contributing time, labor and money to the work of feeding, clothing and rehabilitating people in the heavily-damaged areas.

These represent the servant ministries of the Church of the Brethren. They represent the extension of the body of Christ into the distresses and discomforts of the modern world. These ministries will assume new forms as new emergencies and needs arise, but they will always represent the spirit of Christ who said, "If any of you would be great, let him be your servant; and if he would be the greatest of all, let him be your bond-servant" (Matthew 23:11).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CHURCH CONFRONTS CHANGE

As a denomination, the Church of the Brethren has experienced some of its most decisive change in the twentieth century. In no small measure, much of this change has been initiated by leaders and churches of the North Atlantic District. Confronted by an age of the rising metropolis and disillusioned by an era so heavily scarred by wars, the churches were compelled to modify their ministries to meet the needs of a rapidly, changing world. Most congregations of the district blended an eighteenth century Pietism with a nineteenth century Evangelicalism. The rise of a twentieth century Social Gospel and a reactionary Fundamentalism created some unique blends of congregational life within the district.

In the first seventy-five years of the twentieth century, the Church of the Brethren has experienced the rise of an educated, professional ministry; an increase in social awareness among its membership; and a continuing struggle over the question of authority in religion.

#### The Pastoral Ministry

Many congregations of the district began during a period when members moved into a region and selected ministers from their own numbers. Out of such small beginnings the church organized in Germany. For many decades, churches perpetuated their own ministry by choosing young men from their own laity. As these men grew in their understanding of church polity and in the art of churchmanship, they were invested with authority as elders-in-charge of congregations. The term *free ministry* arose because these faithful servants provided leadership without salaries.

In 1916, one writer described an elder of the church in this manner: "He is a clean-cut Gospel preacher, kind and considerate, but a strict disciplinarian who rules his congregation as Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to rule in their day."<sup>1</sup> This description emerged from an era in which authoritarian rule was regarded as an ideal in the brotherhood. In other eras other ideals were stressed. A survey of writings concerning early ministers of the Church of the Brethren shows that they were described as godly, devout, respected, prudent, earnest, talented and sound in reasoning. Denied the advantages of formal education, many of them were self-educated men.

The North Atlantic District has had an enviable record of strong preaching and sound pastoral ministry. It was asserted of Peter Keyser, Jr., the early minister of the Philadelphia First Church, that "the Church of the Brethren never produced a greater orator, a minister with a deeper or more profound knowledge of the Scriptures, or a preacher of greater eloquence and efficiency in the pulpit."<sup>2</sup> His eloquence attracted crowds of listeners from all denominations.<sup>3</sup>

Following in the tradition of this noted preacher have been other outstanding leaders in the Philadelphia First Church. T. T. Myers, D. W. Kurtz, Charles A. Bame and C. C. Ellis were noted for their pulpit strength. Each of these men not only served as pastor but also distinguished himself in a teaching and writing ministry. D. W. Kurtz was described as a "master on the platform and in the pulpit." M. G. Brumbaugh, also a member of the Philadelphia First Church, was in great demand as an orator and educational leader. Most of them served only briefly in the district and moved to other parts of the brotherhood as soon as their class work was completed. In spite of the brevity of their ministry, each brought to the district a breadth of scholarship, an understanding of the whole Christian Church, and a personal distinction which helped the Church of the Brethren to be highly regarded.

For many decades, ministers functioned in the traditional Protestant pattern of preaching and pastoral visitation. Preaching services were offered several times each Sunday and the sermon was the center of interest. In 1862, for example, the Annual Conference ruled that singing schools should be permitted in the churches on Sundays "if they do not conflict with the time of preaching." For many years it was the custom to preach expository sermons without resorting to notes. James Quinter commented in *The Gospel Visitor* in 1856: "Our Brethren do not use manuscripts in preaching and consequently their sermons are not preserved." In many congregations, ministers were expected to preach extemporaneously and in an expository fashion from the Bible. One of the frequent comments heard among Brethren about 1900 was: "We wish to get as close as possible to the Gospel."

Major changes began to occur in the preaching ministry of the denomination in the period following World War I. Where once preaching had been disproportionately doctrinal and general, the sermons grew more practical and related to the problems of people. H. C. Early expressed himself in 1932 concerning the significant advance the church made in his lifetime:

"The church has moved into a better understanding of the Christian message. . . We are developing a better Biblical interpretation which inspires spirituality, broadens outlook and engenders the spirit of sacrifice and service. . . We have been moving from a gospel of law and authority to a gospel of grace and love; from a negative repressive government to one that is positive and constructive."<sup>4</sup>

The pastoral ministry was formally recognized by the Church of the Brethren during World War I. For a period of seven years, the question of the ministry was debated by the Annual Conferences (1911-1917). One writer commented in 1912, "The supported ministry is with us to stay and we can do no more than regulate it."<sup>5</sup> The Wichita (Kansas) Annual Conference formally acknowledged a series of changes in the ministerial system (1917). It permitted the employment of pastors with reasonable support; it permitted young men to volunteer for the Christian ministry; it authorized the formation of district Ministerial Boards; and it established two degrees in the Christian ministry, the ordained

minister and the elder. In 1919, the pastoral year for the churches of the brotherhood was fixed as beginning on September 1st.

On June 9, 1924, 125 ministers in attendance at the Hershey Annual Conference adopted a constitution for a Pastors' Association. The organization was not recognized by the brotherhood until 1931. A number of ministers from the North Atlantic District wrote articles for *The Gospel Messenger* on behalf of the Pastors' Association in an attempt to upgrade the Christian ministry. Among those who engaged in this writing ministry were Ross D. Murphy, who served for several years as chairman of the association, Ivan C. Fetterman and D. Howard Keiper. Ivan C. Fetterman commented in one of his articles, "Great preachers have been thorough-going students of the Bible. . . They have also been profound readers of material outside of the Bible."<sup>6</sup> H. L. Hartsough, commenting on developing trends among the ministers of the Church of the Brethren, saw pastors using materials from many sources for the glory of God.<sup>7</sup>

When many unknown and unproven young men began to enter the Christian ministry, the Annual Conference required a period of licensing for these men before they were installed into the ministry (1922). At the same time, the conference authorized the permanent licensing of women into the ministry. At this point in the church's history, there was no ordination for women.<sup>8</sup> Members of the study committee submitting the report to the conference were T. T. Myers, D. W. Kurtz and J. W. Fidler.

The North Atlantic District has had five women ministers. Three of these were licensed by the District Ministerial Board. Madilyn Boorse, a member of the Coventry congregation, was licensed by her home congregation on April 6, 1923. After her marriage to Joseph E. Taylor (June 11, 1924), she was permanently licensed to the ministry in the Dunnings Creek congregation of Middle Pennsylvania. During their pastorate in Pennsylvania, Madilyn B. Taylor often preached three times every Sunday morning in the late 1920s. She was ordained to the ministry in May 1959, by the Dunnings Creek Church.



*Marian and Martin Scholten*

Another member of the Coventry congregation, Marian A. Rinehart, was licensed to preach in May, 1927 at the Chicago (Illinois) First Church. She was permanently licensed by the Chicago congregation in 1929 and served with her husband, Martin Scholten, in pastorates in Michigan and Pennsylvania. In 1952, she returned to the North Atlantic District where she has ministered in various leadership positions in the Springfield (1952-1955) and Coventry congregations (1955- ).

Julia A. Croft was licensed to the ministry in the Calvary Church of the Brethren in Philadelphia on September 19, 1925. She had been active with her husband, Samuel B. Croft, in many mission endeavors in the city and was the co-founder of the Bethany and Calvary churches. (See under Calvary Church of the Brethren, Philadelphia).

Florence Fogelsanger Murphy, the first woman in the brotherhood to earn a doctoral degree, was licensed to the Christian ministry in the Philadelphia First Church in 1935. She provided unusual service to the district and to the brotherhood in promoting Brethren Service work and developing Women's Work programs. In recognition of her ability as a speaker and leader among the Brethren, the First Church licensed her to preach in July, 1935.

Lois Detweiler Norris, who was licensed by the Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren in Johnstown, Pennsylvania (1922), served with her husband in the Ambler Church of the Brethren and in many district activities.

The North Atlantic District inaugurated the salaried pastoral system. From the time of the Civil War, when the first pronouncement was made concerning the salaried ministry, to the time of World War I, the denomination consistently opposed the payment of a salary to a minister. As late as 1890, when some pastors of the North Atlantic churches were receiving salaries, the Annual Conference ruled that it was "wrong for Brethren to receive and churches to give a stipulated salary."

An Annual Conference committee visited the Philadelphia First Church on October 27, 1875 to deal with a series of church tensions. The committee specifically dealt with the church's practice of giving precedence to J. P. Hetric over Christian Custer and the taking of basket collections on the Lord's Day for purposes other than for the poor. Roland L. Howe's *The History of A Church* suggests that the Philadelphia First Church undoubtedly had been paying salaries to pastors as early as the 1860s.<sup>9</sup> He also believed that J. P. Hetric was employed as a pastor with a stated salary (1874-1882), although this fact was concealed by the church records since the brotherhood opposed any payment of salaries. J. P. Hetric was paid a salary at the Coventry congregation (1882-1898) by private contributions until 1889, when the church voted to pay him \$400 per year. T. T. Myers was paid \$60 per month as pastor of the Philadelphia First Church (1891-1899), and \$85 per month (1903-1907) in the latter part of his ministry.<sup>10</sup> J. W. Cline, who was pastor of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church (1896-1899), received a salary of \$50 per month for his labors and ex-

penses from funds provided by Mary S. Geiger. In 1900, J. W. Cline became the first paid pastor in California for the Church of the Brethren.<sup>11</sup>

Ross D. Murphy commented on the reluctance of the denomination to accept the salaried pastoral system:

"Some of us can well remember when our free ministry denounced in no uncertain language the dangers and pitfalls of the salaried ministry. It was stoutly argued, with Biblical citations, that paid preachers would sooner or later yield to the temptation of pleasing the congregation rather than boldly and fearlessly proclaiming the whole counsel of God. The Brethren who advocated this policy had in a measure won the right to preach as they did because they gave unstintingly to the needs of the church, visited the sick, organized new churches and saved souls. They were both sincere and sacrificial. What they said had tremendous practical appeal because the expense budget could be kept down to a minimum and the church could easily carry on without financial embarrassment."<sup>12</sup>

Galen K. Walker, who served the Pottstown Church, was helpful in promoting a pension plan for ministers of the denomination. "It was my privilege to make speeches in ministerial meetings in Pennsylvania. . .proposing administrative and technical aspects of such a system", he once wrote.<sup>13</sup> For more than twenty years, he wrote articles for *The Gospel Messenger* urging the creation of a brotherhood pension plan. Roland L. Howe, a layman of the Philadelphia First Church, also wrote concerning the need for such a plan as early as 1934.<sup>14</sup> The pension plan for the denomination became effective in 1943.

The evangelistic meeting was late in winning acceptance in the Church of the Brethren. Evangelistic meetings, revivals, protracted meetings and altar calls were used in many other denominations before the Brethren were willing to utilize them. Brethren of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have questioned the value of methods which over-excite or manipulate people. In 1880, the Annual Meeting urged congregations to be "cautious to use such means as are calculated to get persons into the church without a gospel conversion."<sup>15</sup> In 1921, the Brethren decided that it was wiser to use religious instruction, home influence, personal and pastoral evangelism and the total church organization to win men to Christ than to depend on special revivals.<sup>16</sup>

Although Brethren have questioned the methods of professional evangelists, they have often attended their meetings. J. T. Myers once attended a service conducted by Dwight L. Moody in the city of Philadelphia and was singled out by the noted evangelist to open the meeting with prayer.<sup>17</sup> M. G. Brumbaugh was one of the speakers at the dedication of the large wooden tabernacle erected for the Billy Sunday Crusade in Philadelphia.<sup>18</sup> Churches of the North Atlantic District benefitted from the Crusades of 1915 and many members were added to the church rolls in the city. For a period of time, the music used in such evangelistic meetings was incorporated into the worship of the Sunday Schools and churches of the denomination.

In 1961, forty-four congregations of the Church of the Brethren in Eastern Pennsylvania and the North Atlantic districts cooperated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade at the Philadelphia Convention Hall. Lester M. Rosenberger handled the assignment of reservations to members of the Church of the Brethren for a service conducted on September 9, 1961. Although 1,250 seats were reserved, 1,650 Brethren were in attendance.<sup>19</sup>

The churches of the North Atlantic District have continued to favor many forms of evangelism. Many churches continue to use both fall and spring evangelistic services as a means to win individuals to Christ. Some use a weekly Saturday night service. Other congregations extend an invitation to membership at the close of morning and evening services. Many have used class, fellowship and person-to-person evangelism in their attempt to win the community.

Much of the appeal of evangelistic services has centered in the music used in congregational singing. The Church of the Brethren has had a history of good singing continuing from Peter Becker who was described as "an inspiring leader of song and able in prayer."<sup>20</sup> Beginning with George B. Holsinger, musical editor of the brotherhood, the churches used singing schools and musical institutes as means of promoting good singing.



*Henry G. Gottshall*

Henry G. Gottshall (1903-1946), a composer and writer of church hymns, gave considerable attention to the development of musical programs in the churches of the district. For seven years he conducted the Fisher a capella choir as it rendered musical programs from several radio stations in suburban Philadelphia. He conducted singing classes throughout the district under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education. He was a pioneer in promoting a place for special music in the worship experience of the congregations of the Church of the Brethren.

## Development of the Institutional Church

The period of growth between 1900 and 1975 has been a transitional time for the Church of the Brethren. We have already noted that it was a period in which the church moved from the free ministry concept to the pastoral and professional ministry. It was a period of marked change in the nature of the preaching ministry. It was a time in which the church became involved in numerous cooperative efforts as it reached out to serve the needs of *The World*. Like other denominations, the church has been tempted to forsake its traditional person-centered ministry for a program-centered ministry. Fortunately, the denomination's roots in pietism and the New Testament have kept it faithful to its ministry to people.

The North Atlantic District has cooperated with various brotherhood programs for church renewal and growth. Beginning in 1919, in the 200th anniversary year of the migration of the Brethren to America, the district adopted a series of goals under a program known as the Five Year Forward Movement (1919-1923). W. G. Nyce was named the district director of promotion to encourage aggressive growth in stewardship, missionary activities and church membership. One member said of this movement, "It has given some of our Brethren a new vision of the church and its possibilities."<sup>21</sup>

In another postwar period, the Orlando (Florida) Annual Conference endorsed the Advance With Christ Movement (1947). A few months later, the North Atlantic District organized itself to promote the program. D. Howard Keiper was chosen to be the district director of the Advance. The district published a leaflet suggesting a comprehensive program for the local churches with major emphasis on evangelism, peace, temperance and stewardship. Directors were appointed for each of these four phases of the movement. In 1948, Francis Wampler was the director of temperance; Elmer Q. Gleim the director of peace; J. Grannum Mahon the director of evangelism and Alvin S. Alderfer the director of stewardship.

An Abundant Life in Christ committee was appointed by the district in April, 1953. D. Alfred Repogle, Glen E. Norris and Luke H. Brandt were appointed to plan for a district-wide evangelistic effort. The Annual Conference inaugurated this two-year program in 1952 to take advantage of the fine physical facilities, the trained personnel and the modern means of communication available to the churches. The times were ripe for a great united evangelistic advance. The five congregations of Philadelphia cooperated in an evangelistic emphasis during Lent in 1953 with M. Guy West as the guest leader. At the close of the series of meetings, fifty-five persons recommitted themselves to Christian service. The meetings concluded with a combined lovefeast and communion service in the Philadelphia First Church.

On October 27, 1953, the brotherhood Director of Evangelism, Edward K. Ziegler, met with the district conference in the Royersford Church to deliver three addresses on evangelism. In April and May,

1954, he returned to conduct a preaching-teaching mission in the Ambler Church on three separate occasions. A youth rally met in the Amwell Church on April 24, 1954. The evangelistic emphasis concluded with a district rally in the Coventry Church on May 2, 1954, to hear the concluding address by Bro. Ziegler.

At the close of the anniversary year in 1958, a special Anniversary Call Program was inaugurated by the brotherhood. The North Atlantic District responded by appointing H. B. Albert, a lay member of the Philadelphia First Church, to act as the District Call Representative. Local church leaders met in the Drexel Hill Church on May 16, 1958, for a special training meeting and dinner. In the year which followed, the district responded with a seventy-one per cent increase in giving over the previous year. To assist in the Call program, John D. Keiper prepared a set of slides under the theme, "One Lord, One Church, One District." This program, shown in many churches, emphasized local district history, college and camp ministries, Regional Office programs and the churches of the district.

### Larger Social Involvement

In the first several decades of the twentieth century, the Church of the Brethren became keenly aware of the need to cooperate with other organizations if it wished to accomplish its mission in society. The pressures of World War I and the influence of the Social Gospel movement left its stamp upon the church. Washington Gladden (1836-1918), the father of the Social Gospel movement, warned the Christian church that it is "true of churches as of men that they who would save their lives must lose them."<sup>22</sup> The organization of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America gave the cooperating churches a united voice on the social problems of the age. It also constituted an official recognition of the impact of the Social Gospel.

Some leaders of the Brethren were aware of the need for a broader and fuller interpretation of the Christian message. For many decades, Christian ethics had been confined chiefly to personal life and was silent concerning the massive social problems of the day. The problems of war, economic depression, social injustice, totalitarianism and lawlessness required the church to speak with a united voice if it was to have any impact on society. M. Clyde Horst, writing concerning the Social Gospel, said, "This is not another Gospel. Such expressions as 'Social Gospel' and 'Whole Gospel' merely signify a fuller obedience to the teachings of the Gospel."<sup>23</sup> He observed that Brethren who practice feet washing, the Lord's Supper and communion express their social obligations by these symbols.

Martin Grove Brumbaugh courageously committed himself to government service at a time when many Brethren felt it was wrong to do so. He was the first minister of the Church of the Brethren to earn a doctor of philosophy degree (1894). He served as the first Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico (1900-1902) and was

Superintendent of the Philadelphia Public Schools (1906-1915) when Brethren were saying that Christians "must not become mixed up in politics."<sup>24</sup> M. G. Brumbaugh succeeded John K. Tener as Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on January 19, 1915, affirming instead of swearing the oath of office. In 1916, he believed he had a chance to be nominated for the United States presidency and submitted his name at the Republican Convention in Chicago, Illinois. He withdrew his name after he received twenty-nine votes on the first ballot.



*Martin Grove Brumbaugh*

In 1916, H. C. Early wrote a letter to a member of the Church of the Brethren about Governor Brumbaugh:

"The feeling of the general brotherhood as to Brother Brumbaugh serving his state as governor is much divided. There is dissatisfaction and there is pleasure among the members with his position. Some of the conservative members and congregations are displeased with his being governor of the state. . ."<sup>25</sup>

D. L. Miller wrote a letter to D. L. Lepley of Connellsville, Pennsylvania, concerning the conduct of Governor Brumbaugh in his office:

"I had not read in our papers of the Pittsburgh riot or of the action of Governor Brumbaugh in calling out the state militia to suppress the riot. This is a clear violation of the teaching of the Gospel. The clipping you sent me shows that the Governor is busy even on the Lord's day. If he uses that holy day for political work he is certainly in the wrong."<sup>26</sup>

It was not until the 1933 Annual Conference that the Church of the Brethren issued a clear-cut statement concerning social problems. That paper stated in part,

"We urge the leaders and ministers of the church to speak with clearness and power on the social problems of the day. . . The Church

of the Brethren for two and a quarter centuries held to the doctrines peace, temperance, the spiritual life and brotherhood. We can no longer claim to hold these doctrines unless we apply them to the problems and crises of this day. The only cure for the present calamity is justice and brotherhood, and these ideals of the Church of the Brethren must be promoted throughout the world.”<sup>27</sup>

The Church of the Brethren began to develop cooperative ministries with “denominations of similar faith” in the period following World War I. Efforts were pressed as early as 1925 to work more closely with other Brethren groups and those of Evangelical backgrounds. A Fraternal Relations and Comity Committee has been in existence at the brotherhood level since 1929. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ross D. Murphy was chosen Vice-President of the Philadelphia Federation of Churches (1939-1940) and then succeeded as President (1941-1943). In the years since, many Brethren lay people have contributed time and talent to the work of this Council of Churches. The North Atlantic District deliberated whether it would affiliate with the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and decided in 1938 to send Paul M. Robinson as its first representative. Jesse D. Reber, a former member of the Philadelphia First Church and district pastor, became active in the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and served as its General Secretary for many years (1947-1968).

These district Brethren prepared the way for others to serve on various Council positions in the succeeding years. Among those who were active in the Greater Philadelphia Council of Churches are Helen Markley, Mrs. Pauline Rosenberger, Helen Davis, Elmer Q. Gleim, Mrs. Curvin Heiges and Galen S. Young.

Writers of the 1920s and 1930s were active in emphasizing the social force of the Christian Gospel. They took pains to show that Brethren of earlier generations had actually taken advanced positions on national issues such as indentured servitude, intemperance, oppression of the poor, black slavery and opposition to war.<sup>28</sup> This rising social awareness displayed itself in the North Atlantic District when the conference went on record as “opposing any legislation which moves toward a desecration of the Sabbath, toward the increased sale of liquor and toward the encouragement of gambling and salacious literature.”<sup>29</sup>

A special district committee was appointed in 1951 to prepare a letter of protest to the President of the United States. The committee, comprised of Caleb W. Bucher, Norman F. Ford and Ivan C. Fetterman, presented to the conference a statement objecting to the appointment of an ambassador by the United States government to Vatican City.

In spite of the frequent outcries against the Social Gospel, many elements of the movement have become an integral part of our Brethren witness. The ethical imperatives of Jesus’ ethical teachings; the emphasis on Christian social responsibility; the balancing of individual morality with social morality; and the concern for the oppressed of all classes and races---these have embedded themselves into the thought and witness of the Church of the Brethren. The church of 1975 is more

deeply involved with a compassionate, creative ministry to the life of its times than was the church of 1900.

### The Struggle Concerning Authority

The confusion in American life in the 1920s led to some stern challenges for the Church of the Brethren. It became awake to its social responsibilities at a time when society grew lawless and intemperate. The entire American system was confronted with an unprecedented challenge to its authority. In this period, America developed three major forms of religious expression. A Fundamentalist form relied heavily on traditional doctrines and the authority of an infallible Bible. An experimental form, trusting to the laboratory method as the chief avenue of knowledge, appealed widely to the younger generation. An institutional form, anxious to preserve the organized church, struggled to find solutions to rising world problems. Members of the Church of the Brethren were tempted by both the Fundamentalist and the institutional forms.

The Church of the Brethren in the 1920s was emerging from a period of its history in which great emphasis had been placed on regulations and conference decisions. The question of the authority of the church over the life and conduct of its membership was prominently discussed. Ross D. Murphy wrote about this period of the church's life:

" . . . we must confess that there was a period covering twenty years or more, and in some sections of the brotherhood even longer, when our Annual Meeting *Minutes* almost got away with us. We came very near to the place where we read and interpreted the Bible in the light of what the conference said. At many church council meetings the *Minutes* were almost equally authoritative with the Bible."<sup>30</sup>

Confronted with widespread lawlessness and a general revolt against any institution which had its sanctions in the past, some Brethren wished to return to a spirit of legalism as a form of restraint. This psychology of reliance on authority expressed itself in a number of different ways. In 1922, the district meeting of the North Atlantic churches acted upon a report of Juniata College concerning the fundamentals of faith. The district accepted a set of beliefs upon which all ministers entering the district were to base their teachings. The ten fundamentals were fully in accord with the faith prescribed by the Fundamentalist movement of the time.<sup>31</sup>

In this period, more than a score of state governments began to pass "Blue Laws" designed to curb Sunday activities. The Sunday observance movement was promoted by the Lord's Day Alliance and the International Reform Union and was widely supported by the churches of the district. The Sunday observance advocates focused their attacks primarily on commercialized amusements. Sunday professional baseball and motion pictures were forbidden in many states.<sup>32</sup>

For more than a century, the brotherhood refused to be drawn into public agitation on the temperance question. The first permanent

Temperance Committee in the brotherhood was not formed until 1908. An Anti-Saloon League speaker in 1917, addressing members of the Philadelphia First Church, stated, "If everyone had taken the stand maintained by the Church of the Brethren on temperance, then there would have been no need for an Anti-Saloon League."<sup>33</sup>

A District Temperance Committee was active in promoting support for local option laws (1914), presenting lectures on temperance and purity, and educating the district concerning new legislation. Among those who served on the district committee were George D. Kuns, M. B. Miller, John S. Noffsinger, H. Vernon Slawter, M. C. Swigart and Galen K. Walker. Former district pastors, F. F. Holsopple and A. J. Culler, were active on the brotherhood Temperance Committee.

The temperance movement in the hands of the church remained largely a moral movement until late in the nineteenth century. Although the churches took credit for helping to pass the Prohibition Amendment, great credit must be given to the Anti-Saloon League, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Prohibition Party and a host of economic forces. The food shortages during World War I and the passage of the employers' liability laws in various states resulted in political pressures on the Congress to pass the Eighteenth Amendment<sup>34</sup>. The same pressures were brought to bear on forty-five state legislatures to secure the ratification of the amendment.

Philadelphia has been a center for the Fundamentalist Movement. It was here in May, 1919 that the World's Christian Fundamentals Association was organized. Princeton Theological Seminary in past decades was noted for its Biblical literalism. In 1925, the conservative wing of the Baptists organized the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. The churches of the North Atlantic District could not entirely escape the influence of divisiveness and bitterness associated with religion in the 1920s. Churches were divided over doctrinal issues and many congregations lost members to independent Fundamentalist schisms.

During this period of intense doctrinal division, Ross D. Murphy made an appeal to the churches of the district and the brotherhood:

"But why magnify our differences? They always cause trouble and create division. We may be miles apart on doctrinal statements which have been formulated around the personality of Christ---statements which of necessity are always in the process of changing because of the progressive revelation of God through Christ. As Christians, we agree upon this one thing: men are in need of salvation and Christ is the only one who can meet that need."<sup>35</sup>

The theology of the Fundamentalist movement is actually the revival of beliefs which were widely held in Protestantism in the nineteenth century. As a religious movement it has had structure and identity since 1875 and has consistently stressed millenarianism and literalism as basic tents.<sup>36</sup> It represents a conservative movement in religious thought and tends to reduce Christianity to a creedal form by emphasizing the fundamentals of faith. In this sense it tends to assume an auth-

oritarian approach in religion. In the 1920s and 1930s, the movement assumed a sectarian opposition to the findings of science and the teachings of a growing American liberalism in religion. The Fundamentalists developed a strong distrust for social approaches in Christianity in spite of the fact that John Wesley, a leader of Evangelicalism, was deeply involved with the social problems of his time.

Some phases of the Fundamentalist belief have appealed to the Brethren. The emphasis upon the Bible as central to an understanding of the Christian life; the evangelical zeal; and the stress on doctrine have proved attractive to the Brethren. Other Brethren have distrusted the Fundamentalist movement because they remember the distrust of their forefathers for creedal statements. They chose to emphasize openness to new truth as do modern Brethren.

The anti-evolution struggles of the 1920s involved the Brethren to the extent that an appeal was made to the Annual Conference for a guiding statement about the theory. The conference responded in 1931 with the assertion that "this form of evolution is only a theory" and the church should not "ask for legislation against any of these theories for it would have little effect on the teaching of them."<sup>37</sup>

Florence F. Murphy wrote a letter of commendation to the brotherhood for the fine statement concerning the theory of evolution. She wrote in part,

"I wish to express my appreciation of the report prepared by the Board of Religious Education and the General Education Board in the query concerning the teaching of evolution. This is a report that any Christian denomination might well be proud of. Furthermore, it is in keeping with the traditional practice of the Church of the Brethren and in harmony with the fundamental principle in our faith that God reveals Himself progressively as we are able to receive and accept such revelation. It was the recognition of this principle that prompted our church founders to refrain from formulating creedal statements."<sup>38</sup>

In 1959, an unofficial organization known as the Brethren Revival Fellowship was formed at the Ocean Grove Conference. It was formed by a group of Brethren who grew concerned about the changes which were coming into the life of the Church of the Brethren. A Brethren Revival Fellowship Committee was formed to give guidance to the annual meetings of the association and to assist in the work of publishing the *Brethren Revival Fellowship Witness*, a quarterly pamphlet issued since 1969. In 1974, this committee consisted of Harold S. Martin, Linford J. Rotenberger, W. Hartman Rice, James F. Myer, Kenneth H. Hershey, Howard J. Kreider and Olen B. Landes. Bro. Rotenberger, native to the North Atlantic District, has been active with the Brethren Revival Fellowship since its beginnings.

This loose-knit organization has expressed concern about the tendency of the denomination to set aside the trustworthiness and the authority of the Bible. It has spoken frequently about the need for renewal and revival in the church. It has stated that it is opposed to any

man-centered program but insists on preaching the Gospel of reconciliation of man to God through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It is concerned about preserving the Biblical, Anabaptist, Brethren oriented understanding of the Christian message.<sup>39</sup>

Annual meetings of this Fellowship have been held in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. In 1969, about seventy-five persons were in attendance at an annual meeting in the Indian Creek Church. In 1973, approximately three hundred persons attended the annual meeting in the Broadfording Church of the Brethren in Maryland. In 1974, the movement inaugurated a four-week Bible Institute on the campus of Elizabethtown College.

The Brethren Revival Fellowship represents a conservative renewal movement within the denomination. It is designed to provide opportunities for fellowship and service for some Brethren who see the church changing and who wish to preserve some of the values of former generations. The literature of the movement defends the fundamentals associated with the Fundamentalist Movement as well as the principles of the Church of the Brethren. It attacks many forms of cooperative Christianity, the conciliar movements and the world-wide ecumenical movement.

## CHAPTER SIX

## THE DISTRICT AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In the closing decade of the nineteenth century, someone wrote to the editor of *The Gospel Messenger* to ask, "Were the early fathers of the Brethren Church educated men?" The editor replied,

"Some of them were finely educated and exerted considerable influence in educational circles. They favored schools and threw their influence on the side of advanced mental culture. For a time our people lost their interest in education but are now regaining it and in due time we will give to the educational interest the attention it deserves."<sup>1</sup>

The Brethren editor continued by referring to some leading personalities of southeastern Pennsylvania who were active in the educational movement. Ludwig Hoecker, the leader of the Sunday School movement in Germantown and the Ephrata Community; Christopher Saur, Sr., who printed the first German-language Bible in the new world; Christopher Saur, Jr., who published the first religious periodical in America under the title of "Spiritual Magazine" (1763); Susan Douglass, who conducted an early school in the parsonage of the colonial Germantown Church; Peter Keyser, Jr., who was active in many phases of Philadelphia's civic life, including service on Philadelphia's early Board of Education; Isaac Price, an early publisher and religious leader of Montgomery County---all of these were advocates of sound Christian Education at the time of the church's beginnings in America.

These early church leaders were ardent readers of the Scriptures. They rejected creeds and gave the Bible a place of priority as a guide to faith and a standard for life and conduct. Martin G. Brumbaugh frequently showed with his lectures a set of Scripture cards containing quotations from the Bible and religious poetry. These cards were printed as early as 1744 by Christopher Saur for use in Sunday School work more than a quarter of a century before Robert Raikes began his Sunday School movement. For the greater part of the nineteenth century, the Brethren had no literature for study beyond the Bible itself. *The Gospel Visitor* (1851-1883) provided an educational ministry to the Brethren for three decades. On March 26, 1872, Henry J. Kurtz introduced an illustrated children's paper, a pioneer in its class.

Abram H. Cassel claimed there was widespread reading of the Bible in the three centuries which preceded the origin of the Brethren. The thirst for religious understanding gave rise to Sunday Schools and Bible classes.<sup>3</sup> Among the books and papers of Bro. Cassel's library is a printed manual composed by Johana Werner in 1546 for use by the Schwenkfelders in their Sunday Schools. There were Sunday Schools in Scotland (1560), Bath, England (1668), and Plymouth, Massachusetts (1669), in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ludwig Hoecker's Sunday School, inaugurated in the Germantown Church in 1738,<sup>4</sup> was continued in the Ephrata Community from 1744 until 1777.<sup>4</sup> After the

Schwenkfelders arrived in America, they devoted every other Sunday to the religious instruction of their children under the name of *Die Kinder-lehr* (1734).

About 1860, the Sunday School was reinstated in the Church of the Brethren. Some congregations, including those of southeastern Pennsylvania, conducted religious schools without the consent of the Annual Conference prior to the Civil War. The Annual Conference of 1857 authorized the use of Sunday Schools provided they were "conducted in Gospel order and if they are made the means of teaching scholars a knowledge of the Scriptures." To many members of the brotherhood, the Sunday School was a form of worldliness. In 1879, a group of Brethren in Southern Ohio objected so strenuously to high schools, Sunday Schools and protracted evangelistic meetings that they eventually separated from the denomination (1881).

Union Sunday Schools were conducted in Pennsylvania in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>6</sup> Some congregations of the Church of the Brethren participated in these. Early Sunday Schools in the North Atlantic District were conducted in the Coventry congregation (1845), Philadelphia First Church (1853), Green Tree Church (1868) and the Amwell Church (1873).

Sunday School work at the brotherhood level began to win acceptance at the turn of the century. One observer at the 1901 Annual Conference noted that the church gave more attention to Sunday School work in this conference than in any prior year. The rise of the Adult Education Movement in the nation spurred interest in Sunday School work in many denominations. John S. Noffsinger, who pursued academic studies in the New York City area, prepared a pamphlet under the title, "Studies in Adult Education" (1926). He traced the rise of correspondence courses, lyceums and Chautauquas and their impact upon adult education in the nation. Before the Chautauquas began (1874) there were scarcely any adult education programs in the nation. By the time the movement collapsed in the 1920s, extension courses, summer schools and correspondence study had spread through much of the country. When the Chautauqua movement broadened its curriculum to include general culture and secular subjects, Sunday School education was neglected and secular education became prominent.

The growth of educational structure came gradually to the brotherhood and the churches. A Sunday School Advisory Committee, formed in 1896, became the Sunday School Board in 1911. When independent Christian Endeavor Societies threatened the work of the Sunday School with youth and adults, the brotherhood organized the Christian Workers Society (1903). J. G. Francis reminded an Annual Conference delegate body (1912) that the Schuylkill Valley Brethren had Christian Workers' meetings five years before the Annual Conference recognized them. He noted that the cooperating congregations of the North Atlantic District formed an organization known as the Christian Helpers' Society in order to encourage the practice of what had been taught in the Sunday Schools. By entrusting young people

with responsibilities, they became acquainted with the work and organization of the church.<sup>7</sup>

The Christian Workers' Organization (1903) was formed to provide activities for Brethren young people who were attending youth societies of other denominations.<sup>8</sup> Under brotherhood direction, courses of study were developed from the Bible to help maintain Christian life in actual practice. For several decades, however, the organization was converted by some groups into literary societies with emphasis on dramas, poetry, book reviews and social events. This organization represented the beginnings of youth work in the Church of the Brethren.

The Home Department, adopted by many churches of the district, was an attempt to bring the Sunday School resources to homes where people were aged or confined. The first Home Department in the brotherhood began in 1880 and was a valuable innovation to Sunday School work. It made possible the extension of Sunday School membership and provided library books and Sunday School literature to members who could not attend the meetings of the church.

The growth of boards and committees brought a warning which has become familiar. "If we are not careful", said D. L. Miller, "we may become 'boarded up' after a while. You know there is such a thing as getting too much machinery."<sup>9</sup> The brotherhood advocated the selection of Sunday School Secretaries to coordinate the work of Christian Education, to promote the use of Brethren literature, to compile statistics for annual reports and to labor with churches to extend Sunday School work (1898). The North Atlantic District appointed its first Sunday School Secretary in 1917 when George E. Yoder undertook the work. Others who served the district in succeeding years were W. G. Nyce, H. Vernon Slawter, Mrs. Quincy A. Holsopple and Trostle P. Dick.

The first district Sunday School convention for the North Atlantic Brethren was held in 1912 in the Bethany Church of Philadelphia. More than 100 workers attended this combined Sunday School and Missionary convention. Addresses were given by W. G. Nyce, A. J. Culler, M. C. Swigart and D. W. Kurtz on the general theme, "Personal Evangelism."

Sunday School meetings were authorized by the brotherhood in 1897 "provided they are kept within the bounds of Christian propriety and are conducted in harmony with the principles held by the brotherhood."<sup>10</sup> The North Atlantic District used these meetings to promote Sunday School work and urged each congregation to send at least one representative for each twenty members in the Sunday School. In 1917, J. Linwood Eisenberg addressed the Sunday School convention in the Philadelphia First Church on the theme, "Unity For Practical Christianity." He stressed the need to minimize differences and to magnify points of agreement in order to develop a successful church life.<sup>11</sup>

Early teaching in the district was not restricted to lecture. Skilled childrens' workers introduced the project method into teaching at the beginning of the century. H. K. Ober related an experience he had on a visit to the Brooklyn First Church:

"A few years ago in Brooklyn, I found a teacher with just a handful of children. On the wall was a map on which were buttons to indicate the location of towns. She was teaching these children *The Life of Paul*. I saw those little fellows go up with a gleeful eye and wrap the string around each button and take it to the next place. I said, 'This is a good thing'."<sup>12</sup>

Doctrinal teaching and preaching received major emphasis in the first several decades of the twentieth century. The General Sunday School Board published a volume entitled, *Studies in Doctrine and Devotion* (1919), for use by churches in instructing members in the principles and practices of the denomination. C. C. Ellis and D. W. Kurtz, former district pastors, joined with S. S. Blough in writing this volume. Although the Annual Conference encouraged the writing of the volume, it would not formally approve it lest in time some people might accept it as the creed of the church. Membership classes, officially recognized by the brotherhood in 1916, used the new volume for study.

Bible Conferences were popular methods of educating church members in the early decades of the twentieth century. The first Bible Conference held in America was introduced in 1868 by George C. Needham, a Plymouth Brother, at Boston, Massachusetts. The Brethren of Eastern Pennsylvania and the North Atlantic districts used the conference extensively in the 1920s and 1930s. Bible lectures were used in association with the Annual District Meetings of the district from 1912 until 1920. The colleges lent their support to this method of education by offering Bible Institutes to any church that wished for them.

The first Vacation Bible School of the brotherhood was held in the Chicago (Illinois) Church of the Brethren in 1919. The North Atlantic District had several Vacation Schools in 1921. The Coventry Church, under the direction of Aubrey R. Coffman and his wife, and the Philadelphia First Church, conducted Vacation Schools in the summer of 1921. The Daily Vacation Bible School program was highly recommended because it made good use of buildings and equipment, devoted increased time to Bible study, trained teachers for Sunday School work and promoted the mission program of the brotherhood.

The Sunday School movement reached the peak of its enthusiasm in the 1920s. This was also the period in which the Christian Education program of the churches was criticized for its failure to reach millions of children and adults in the nation. As a lay movement, it was criticized for using unqualified staffs and methods which did not help youth develop standards by which to direct their lives. In spite of these criticisms, the Sunday School evolved from a stage in which an assortment of Bible verses constituted the curriculum to a complete program of graded lessons in the 1920s. Honest attempts were made to relate the subject-matter to the life and experiences of the learner.

In the face of these criticisms, churches established Christian Education objectives and began to forsake the method of indoctrination. Mary Grace Martin, who once resided with her family in the North Atlantic District, became a member of the brotherhood Sunday School publica-

tions staff. She edited children's papers and directed children's work. Teachers began to meet for planning periods and learners were grouped by ages. The religious education ideal of shaping, moulding and training, so widely accepted in the nineteenth century, was supplanted by the ideal of recreating independent personalities into Christlike characters.

For a period of several years, the practice of released time was regarded as one of the most significant changes in Christian Education. After the shock of the depression and the threat of new wars, educators in the 1930s began to turn to religious education for support. They resorted to a cooperative program which was introduced in 1914 by which children were permitted to be released from public schools on the request of their parents, to attend religious classes in their neighborhoods. In 1936, 225,000 pupils were enrolled in this program in forty-three states.<sup>13</sup> One of the concerns of the Pottstown District Conference (1946) was the way Week-day Religious Education could be used by the churches.

In order to promote greater unity of effort in the district, the Board of Christian Education of the North Atlantic District sponsored a quarterly news sheet under the caption, "The Church of the Brethren at Work." This paper was distributed widely to local church workers. The news sheet was filled with articles written by district personnel and contained items of use to all church workers (1941-1945).

At midcentury, Christian Education in the churches began to stress the classical heritage of the Christian faith. Under the influence of lay leadership in earlier decades, the historical setting of the Christian faith was largely ignored. For the Church of the Brethren, this was a time of pilgrimages to Germantown, Coventry, Amwell and the Indian Creek congregations. It was also the era which stressed the use of Brethren heritage materials developed for the 250th anniversary year of the denomination.

Under the guidance of Virginia S. Fisher, who was the Director of Christian Education for the Eastern Regional Board (1951-1959) and the Tri-District Committee (1961-1970), a series of Leadership Training schools met at various locations in the district. In 1960, the Indian Creek, Coventry and Philadelphia First churches hosted a school in which Franklin Cassel, Donald Leiter, Hiram Frysinger and R. W. Schlosser were leaders. Churches of the district also participated in the Mission XII program in order to strengthen the lay leadership of the congregations. Drexel Hill, Coventry, Ambler, Wilmington and Philadelphia First Church participated in the Mission XII experiences in 1963. When the new *Encounter Series* was produced by the brotherhood, curriculum workshops at the Coventry and the Philadelphia First churches introduced the materials to the district leaders (1967).

In the fifty-nine years of its existence, the North Atlantic District saw major changes in its Christian Education program. A significant improvement was introduced when the churches accepted visual education as a teaching technique. The membership moved from an era

in which they opposed the showing of "imaginary Bible views. . .in a darkened room with a magic lantern" (1893) to another era in which they gathered to witness full-length sixteen millimeter sound films presenting "The Life of Paul" and "Martin Luther" (1948). In 1945, Hiram J. Frysinger instituted a visual education library which has become the most exhaustive and widely-used resource in the brotherhood and has been increasingly used by churches of other denominations. This film library has become an important center for churches of Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia.

The Christian Education movement also rediscovered the importance of the family in Christian growth. In the face of rising social problems created by the nation's mobility, economic distress, housing shortages and changing sexual codes, the district explored adult and family education as a means of counteracting the declining religious sentiment. Family Life Institutes were held at Elizabethtown College (1961, 1971, 1974) and in many local congregations with professional leadership.

### District Camping

The Church of the Brethren has been active in camping programs since the early 1920s. These have proven meaningful adjuncts to the local congregation's Christian Education ministry. Camping has provided unparalleled experiences in group living, social maturation and purposeful activities. Many individuals believe that their own camping experiences have been the single largest determining factor in the development of their Christian characters.

The North Atlantic District has been fortunate in the quality of its camp leadership. Ross D. Murphy, with his concern for children; W. Harold Row, with his devotion to service ministries; B. Mildred Grater, with her skills in teaching; Wilma Stern Lewis, with her wide interest in people; David K. Hanawalt, with his enthusiasm for outdoor education---all of these and many others have contributed to the development of the camping program of the district.

Inasmuch as the district was without its own camp site, the Board of Education provided many sites for district youth. The first site was Camp Stardust near Collegeville, Pennsylvania. The enrollment in this camp reached a peak of 118 in 1940. Donald and Marie Snively, active youth leaders for the North Atlantic District, recalled the memorable experience of watching candles floating down the Perkiomen stream at the time of the concluding candlelighting services.

Not all church members responded to the challenges of camping. Leaders repeatedly appealed to the churches for support. In order to encourage enrollments, camp banquets were used to bring young people together. In 1942, Raymond R. Peters, brotherhood Director of Young People's Work, spoke at a banquet in the Coventry Church. The congregation served a meal to the youth at a cost of thirty-five cents per person.

Ross D. Murphy, who frequently took youth of the Philadelphia First Church on fishing excursions, discussed camping in 1943:

"I believe in summer camps because they are just as much a part of the church program as the Sunday School or any other organization that aims to develop Christian character. If I, as a pastor, pay no attention to the opportunities which camping affords, I fail to discharge my duties and the children miss something worthwhile. Why not fill the minds of children with memories of the morning watch, Bible study out in the open, wholesome recreation under the direction of consecrated camp leaders, evening vespers and camp fires? Why not give them something better than movies and cheap entertainment? Brethren, summer camping will give them something better. Give it a trial."<sup>14</sup>

In 1943, the summer camping program was moved to Oaks, Pennsylvania, to a site which was called Camp Arcola. Luke E. Ebersole, B. Mildred Grater and John C. Middlekauff directed the Junior and Senior campers who numbered 134 in this year. David K. Hanawalt, who wrote a master of education thesis for New York University on "Camp Leadership Training" (1940), managed this camp and succeeding camps until 1945.

The district camp was moved to Camp Fernbrook, five miles southwest of Pottstown (1944-1945). A committee, consisting of David K. Hanawalt, Luther H. Harshbarger and B. Mildred Grater, was formed to locate a permanent camp site. The committee recommended that a partnership with the new Camp at Bethel, Pennsylvania (Camp Swatara), be rejected in favor of a camp closer to the churches of the district.<sup>15</sup> Camp Fernbrook was offered to the district for the sum of \$20,000 but was rejected in 1944 as too costly.

From July, 1946, to August, 1949, the youth of the district camped at Oaks, in a site which was known as Camp Wren's Nest. A series of successful camps was conducted here under the leadership of David K. Hanawalt and Elmer Q. Gleim. Camp Wren's Nest was entrusted to the Green Tree Church under terms of the will of Willoughby H. Reed, a druggist of Norristown. The church granted the district the right to use the property for camping purposes.

In 1948, the District Conference selected a new camp site committee. This committee was composed of Wilbur A. Martin, Evelyn Martin, Wilma Stern Lewis, Mark Waltz, Philip Norris, Lester M. Rosenberger, J. Richard Gottshall and Philip R. Markley. A recommendation of the committee to cooperate with the Eastern District in its camping program at Camp Swatara was accepted by the District Conference in 1949. In 1969, the North Atlantic District sent 126 campers to the Eastern District camp.

### Youth Ministries

The Brethren of the Schuylkill River Valley had youth programs as early as 1899. In 1900, the second annual consecration assembly for young people, with two hundred and fifty youth, met at Port Providence near the Green Tree Church. Addresses were given by J. P. Hetric, T.

T. Myers, J. Allan Myers and C. F. McKee. The emphasis in these addresses was on missions and the advantages of the Missionary Reading Circle.<sup>16</sup>

There was pressure for the formation of a brotherhood youth organization to unify youth work as early as 1902. The Christian Workers' Organization, formed in 1903, failed to meet the needs of young people. By 1922, youth work was organized at the brotherhood level and Chauncey H. Shamberger was appointed to serve as the national director (1920-1930).

The Sunday School Association of the North Atlantic District sponsored youth work at the district level. In 1922, the district was subdivided into a northern and a southern zone to encourage frequent youth activities. Foster B. Statler and Esther N. Swigart were guests of the youth conference held in the Royersford Church on December 12, 1922, where 144 youth met. At this meeting, youth leaders were appointed for the cooperating congregations: Rudolph Kulp (Coventry), Clifford Steinrich (Parker Ford), John Schlegel (Pottstown), Clara Hallman (Green Tree) and Helen Gottschall (Ryersford).

In the southern zone, 177 youth met at the Philadelphia First Church on December 15, 1922. Local youth representatives appointed at this meeting were Russell Esray (Philadelphia First), John Gotwals (Bethany Church), Margaret Kuns (Geiger Brethren), Raymond Morris (Germantown Church), Edgar Grater (Norristown) and Mark K. Speicher (Wilmington).

Youth conferences were conducted regularly in the 1920s and 1930s. Toward the close of 1928, D. Howard Keiper and Paul Zuck were appointed to direct the youth activities of the Philadelphia and the Schuylkill areas respectively. The first all-day youth conference was conducted on November 17, 1928 in the Philadelphia First Church. On November 15-16, 1929, the Germantown Church Youth Conference heard Grace Livingston Hill and Charles D. Bonsack speak. Offerings from these meetings were given toward the support of missionaries from the district.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, youth work in the North Atlantic District was directed by Esther N. Swigart, W. Harold Row, Wilma Stern Lewis, Mark C. Ebersole and Donald L. Snively. Edith Repogle and Juniata Holsopple represented the district at the North American Youth Conference in Lakeside, Ohio (1936), to hear speakers of world distinction. Young people in the 1940s dedicated themselves to many practical service programs, collecting books for Civilian Public Service camps, volunteering for action programs in work camps and contributing sums of money to needy youth. A youth visitation program was sponsored in 1941 to encourage increased youth activities in the local congregations and to stress peace education.

In the 1950s, district youth were active in promoting interest in the historical shrines of the Brethren. Their cabinet cooperated with the Regional Youth Cabinet in promoting an Historical Bus Tour through southeastern Pennsylvania in August, 1953. John D. Keiper, of the

Coventry congregation, was responsible for the arrangements. The participants visited national shrines as well as those of unique interest to the Brethren. Included in the itinerary were the meeting houses at Germantown, Coventry, Amwell and Indian Creek. They also stopped at the Methachton Cemetery where Christopher Saur, Jr. is buried and at the Klein Cemetery, the resting place of Peter Becker and Rudolph Harley.

In 1914, a speaker at the Annual Conference remarked, "You all know the Wissahickon. It is your river Jordan in America."<sup>17</sup> It was not until 1955 that a marker was placed on the banks of the Wissahickon to indicate the site of the first baptism by the Brethren in America. Under the joint auspices of the youth cabinets of the Eastern Region, the young people formed a plan for a marker as a direct result of the historical tour of 1953. Virginia S. Fisher, the Regional Director of Christian Education, devoted many hours to the planning of a day of dedication for the marker.



The service of dedication was held on May 15, 1955 with six hundred people in attendance. The North Atlantic District youth president, Stanley L. Davis, Jr., presided over the services. Donald Fogelsanger, the Regional Youth Cabinet president, led the assembled congregation in the litany of dedication for the marker. The plaque was unveiled by Stanley L. Davis, Jr. and Phyllis Kulp, members of the district youth

cabinet and participants in the historical tour of 1953. John D. Keiper recounted the history of the project.

The guest speaker for the dedication was Vernard Eller, the brotherhood editor of youth publications. In his address on the theme, "To Build Again", he said concerning the baptisms of 1723,

"The baptism of the Wissahickon was every bit as much of an accomplishment as the baptism at Schwarzenau for the Brethren were re-

"The baptism of the Wissahickon was every bit as much of an accomplishment as the baptism at Schwarzenau for the Brethren were rebuilding in the ruins, were picking up the pieces and starting over."<sup>18</sup>

In the years which followed, the Germantown Church and the Wissahickon baptismal site attracted many Brethren. Churches within and beyond the district made pilgrimages to these historic sites to acquaint themselves with the wooded ravine where monks once created a retreat and where Brethren made a new beginning. Some churches have used the Wissahickon site for their own baptismal services.<sup>19</sup>

Youth work in the 1950s was arduous. Only few youth gave direction to the work. In 1952, the district youth cabinet sponsored the appearance of the brotherhood peace caravaners in ten congregations. At a time when "Youth For Christ" was making an impact on many district congregations, some people criticized the district youth organization for its refusal to adopt the methods of this new movement.<sup>20</sup> District youth chose to dedicate themselves to practical and meaningful service programs.

To unite the district youth into meaningful activities, summer field workers were employed from 1957 to 1959. Stanley L. Davis, Jr., John D. Keiper and John Kreps, Jr., gave leadership in successive summers to the district youth. During the summer of 1959, John Kreps, Jr., contacted more than 300 young people. This was also a period in which John D. Keiper edited a youth publication known at first as "The Southeaster" (1948-1958) and later as "The Intercom" (1959-1960). This newsletter was mailed to pastors, youth and members of the various district boards and committees.

In the 250th anniversary year of the denomination, the district youth cabinet arranged for the observance of a lovefeast and communion service in the Coventry Church (January 1, 1958). The North Atlantic District cabinet hosted the cooperating districts of Pennsylvania. Two hundred and eighty people attended this special service. John D. Keiper developed a helpful audio-visual program to acquaint members with the district program. It was first entitled, "Around The North Atlantic District in Twenty Minutes" and later changed to "One Lord, One Church, One District" (1958).

The youth have participated in brotherhood speech contests and have sponsored contests of their own. Pat Smith, of the Green Tree Church, participated in the Eugene (Oregon) Conference speech contest in 1956. On April 13, 1958, William Rupp and Jean Neff, both of the Potts-

town Church, delivered speeches in a district contest in the Royersford Church, speaking on the theme, "Christ, The Church and Race."

A wide variety of programs have been developed in order to encourage greater youth involvement. A Youth Action Plan was adopted by the district cabinet to spur youth organizations to activity. Quarterly meetings by the youth have emphasized social affairs, work programs, discussion meetings and camp retreats. On November 22, 1964, the young people sponsored an open forum on "Bible Reading in the Schools" at the Philadelphia First Church. Inez Long and Carl MacIntyre, Jr., represented opposing points of view in the debate. This occurred at a time when many people believed the Supreme Court had "banned God from the schools" by its ruling against the devotional use of Scripture and prayer in public schools.

Youth programs have been created by youth with the assistance of pastoral and lay counselors. Since the 1920s, the Youth Fellowship has had the following presidents: Warren Price, Harry Leopold, Ezra T. Selders, B. Mildred Grater, Walter Dummeldinger, Henry Eckenrode, Philip Norris, Mark E. Waltz, Harold Kulp, Stanley L. Davis, Jr., Nancy Rosenberger, Franklin Lee, Galen Lloyd, Sylvia Hixon, Albert Dotts, James Reber, Harold Kline, William Webber, George Hallman, Deanna Hixon, Marsha Saylor and Nancy Hoffmaster.

### Adult Work

Traditionally, the women's work movement dates from July 21, 1885 when twenty-five women of the Altoona Church of the Brethren began to raise funds to apply to the church indebtedness. Other women's groups were organized at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and Mount Morris, Illinois, in the same year.<sup>21</sup> A number of years before women's work organizations were approved by the Church of the Brethren, *The Primitive Christian* (1876) carried a letter from Harleysville, Pennsylvania, which stated,

"As I am much interested in the Danish mission, I hold forth the necessity of contributing to it, upon which the following young sisters (mostly sewing girls) resolved to contribute all that they could earn by one week's sewing. . . The total amount that six girls contributed was \$10.75."<sup>22</sup>

In 1878, a woman member of the Church of the Brethren commended the denomination for the interest it was showing in the church extension movement of the time. Regular reports were made concerning the support given to this movement by individuals and organizations. Under an item for the date March 12, 1878, was the following note: "Sisters of the Coventry Church, Pennsylvania, \$63.85. . ."<sup>23</sup>

Women's work activities were first organized in the North Atlantic District as Sisters' Aid Societies. Mothers' meetings were conducted as early as 1893 in the Philadelphia First Church under the sponsorship of Mrs. J. S. Thomas. Beginning in 1906, and continuing for several decades, Mothers' meetings were held at the time of the Annual Confer-

ence.<sup>24</sup> In 1913, Mrs. M. C. Swigart called representatives of the various Mothers' meetings and Sisters' Aid Societies to her home in Germantown to determine how much work the organizations had accomplished on behalf of the church. A second meeting, convened in the home of Mrs. T. F. Shoemaker of Ambler, in 1915 to form the district organization. The goals adopted by the organization were "winning souls for Christ and stimulating interest in the formation of new societies."<sup>25</sup>

In 1916, ten societies of the district contributed \$500 to the District Mission Board to begin a new mission. The money was used for the support of existing missions in the district. In the next fifteen years, the number of district societies grew from ten to seventeen and their services expanded to include Red Cross assistance, foreign mission support, home mission support and contributions to the Geer Industrial School of Virginia. A report of the giving of the district societies from 1915 to 1931 revealed the following:

Home mission contributions.....	\$32,211.00
Foreign mission contributions.....	5,198.00
Contributions to district churches.....	<u>18,526.00</u>

Total Contributions      \$55,935.00

It was not until 1917 that full brotherhood recognition was accorded the Sisters' Aid Society. By this time, the organization had made itself an essential and significant part of the brotherhood, pledging large sums of money to missionary and home mission projects. The women of the North Atlantic District joined with others in pledging support for the Mary N. Quinter Memorial Fund (1915-1919), the Anklesvar Girls' School of India (1919-1922) and the Ping Ting Hospital Administration Building of China.

Beginning about 1925, a strong sentiment formed for a unified and enlarged program for women in the life of the church. In the 1930s and 1940s, many activities of the women in the brotherhood and the district centered on missions and pioneer projects sponsored by Brethren Service. The base for a broad program was laid in 1929 when the Council of Women's Work was formed to combine the efforts of the General Aid Society, the Mothers' and Daughters' Association and the Womens' Missionary Society. Florence F. Murphy was a member of this brotherhood Council (1930-1939) and served as its president. In 1931, Mrs. Murphy reported,

"Women have always been interested in the evangelistic and missionary activities of the church. . . The fact that during the past twenty years, \$1,500,000 has been contributed by and through the women toward carrying forward the program of the church is itself a service worthy of the fine spirit of consecration that prompted it. <sup>26</sup>"

Under the leadership of Mrs. William J. Wadsworth, Jr., and Mrs. I. S. Hoffer, the district Women's Work Organization in the 1930s sponsored Bible-reading programs, paid off the indebtedness on the Brooklyn Italian mission (1932), gave financial support to the Neffsville Home (1932) and supported the various national Women's Work projects---all

in a period of economic depression. In addition, their interests extended to the civic and economic life of the times. In 1932, Mrs. Wadsworth urged women to take their full share of responsibility in the elections to maintain the national constitution. In 1935, Mrs. M. A. Rinehart, director of peace and temperance, suggested that letters be directed to Governor George H. Earle to assure that motion pictures be maintained at a high level of programming and that appropriate programs for children be maintained on the radio.<sup>27</sup> A writer of this period commented about the involvement of women in the national life,

"As women have become more and more dependent on their own resources, they have become increasingly concerned with the social and economic problems of modern life and the sewing circle as a church activity does not satisfy them."<sup>28</sup>

The Women's organizations discovered a ministry of sharing goods and money during the tension-filled years of World War II. "Meal-a-Day" containers were used so that a starving mother or child in Europe might have food or clothing. The women of the district gave liberally to Civilian Public Service camps, China Relief, the Japanese Relocation Center of Brooklyn and mission projects. They collected or made many thousands of pounds of soap from used fat, collected clothing and made surgical dressings for use by the Red Cross Society.

A church with a minimal organization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries found very few places of service for laymen. This was true in spite of the fact that Pietism generally taught its followers to feel a strong sense of responsibility to witness to their faith. Curiously, women's activities flourished in the Church of the Brethren before men found a lay ministry. If men displayed any special talent or alertness, they were usually called to the Christian ministry and lost the opportunity to function as laymen. Aside from the teaching of Sunday School classes, holding a church office or serving as ushers, there was little else for men to do. The church was controlled by elders and the laity had little place in the organizational structure.

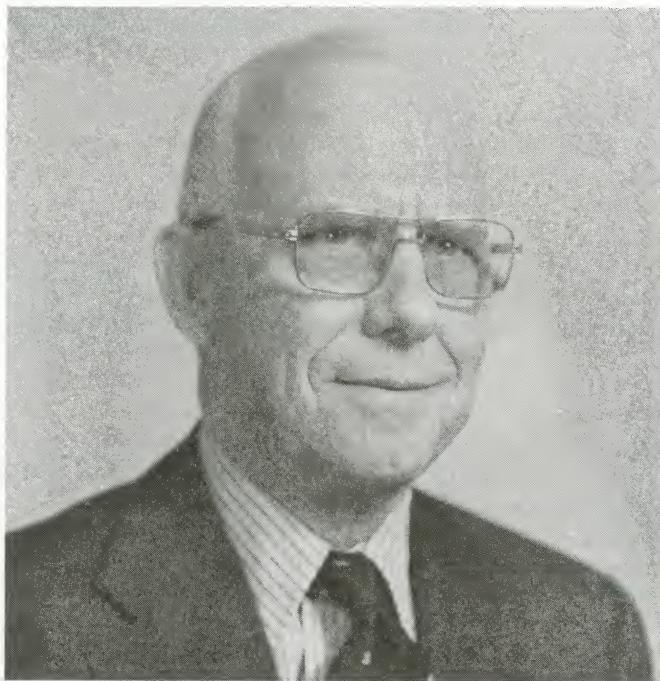
In the Church of the Brethren, the first steps towards a Men's Work Organization were taken on June 11, 1927. At the Hershey Annual Conference the first national gathering of laymen was formed into "Men's Work of the Church of the Brethren." The purpose of the new organization was to stimulate

"the interest of laymen everywhere in the general program of the church, seeking the full and efficient life for them, binding them together for Christian fellowship, holding them together for the ways and will of God, guiding them together in preparation for brotherly work in the Kingdom in their church and in their communities, creating thereby in them a consciousness of their united possibilities for the Kingdom and training them for full and consecrated service."<sup>29</sup>

A Men's Work Organization took form in the North Atlantic District in 1944. It gradually became an integral part of the Christian Education program and began to sponsor projects in cooperation with Women's Work and Brethren Service. The district organization promoted Lord's

Acre projects in local congregations, emphasized stewardship enlistment, cooperated with family life programs of the district and promoted support for many mission projects. The first constitution and by-laws of the district organization was written in 1950.

Lester M. Rosenberger (1904- ), an active layman of the Philadelphia First Church, was influential in district and brotherhood Men's Work activities. From 1957 to 1959, he was a member of the Council of Men's Work at the brotherhood level. His leadership as a Christian layman and businessman has earned for him many distinctions, including the office of moderator of the North Atlantic District (1966) and an honorary doctor of laws degree from Juniata College (June, 1972). He has been a distinguished trustee and benefactor of Juniata College for many years. A native of Philadelphia, he married Pauline Howe on January 31, 1931. Both Lester and Pauline have been involved in many offices in their church and community. At one time, Pauline was directing Women's Work activities while Lester was chairman of the Men's Work Organization in the North Atlantic District.



*Lester M. Rosenberger*

In 1952, when Lester M. Rosenberger was serving as president of the Men's Work Organization, a service of dedication was conducted at the Germantown Church for a jeep which the district helped to purchase for the Nigerian mission field. The jeep was used by Paul W. Petcher during the years he spent in medical missions in Africa. The district organ-

ization has also sponsored a continuing fund to aid people who wish to prepare for the Christian ministry.

For more than a decade, the men and women of the district united to sponsor an annual adult work banquet. The first of these meetings brought 200 persons together at "The Whispering Pines" to hear Donovan Beachley describe the Holy Land and Brethren Service ministries in Europe (November 1, 1952). A total of 375 persons met at a dinner meeting in the Central Schwenkfelder Church at Worcester, Pennsylvania (December, 1954). The program featured musical selections by a mixed quartet from Juniata College and "The Trumpeters" from the Calvary Church of Brooklyn. Harold B. Brumbaugh and Calvert N. Ellis spoke on the importance of lay witness in the modern church.

Hannah H. Funk was recognized on January 7, 1954 for her service to the district through the Women's Work Organization. Beginning in 1933, she succeeded Nevada B. Markley as the Secretary-Treasurer of the organization and faithfully served until 1954. Mrs. Funk was also active in the Philadelphia First Church as a deaconess and leader of Women's Work.

The following have served as presidents of the Women's Work Organization since its beginnings in 1913: Mrs. M. C. Swigart, Mrs. W. H. B. Schnell, Mrs. William J. Wadsworth, Jr., Mrs. Irwin S. Hoffer, Mrs. B. F. Waltz, Mrs. Lester M. Rosenberger, Mrs. Ernest D. Lewis, Mrs. Clarence Wickersham, Mrs. Lucille Wise, Mrs. Martha Hershberger, Mrs. Mary E. Bendinelli and Mrs. Hazel Dick.

Those who have served as chairmen of the Men's Work Organization are: Rudolph Kulp, Lester M. Rosenberger, Stanley L. Davis, Sr., Robert M. Barr, Neil Detweiler, Ralph E. Kreps, Eli H. Stoltzfus, Clifford Lerch, Thomas Reithof and Harry Stokes.

### The District's Colleges

Although many members of the Church of the Brethren questioned the value of higher education, a few became leading advocates for advanced education. Many of these proponents of education were at one time or another associated with the North Atlantic District. Christopher Saur, Sr., a graduate of Marburg University and a student of medicine at the University of Halle, was a leader in organizing the Germantown Academy. James Quinter, one-time resident of the district, stated in *The Gospel Visitor* (1855) that many Brethren leaders were school teachers. His daughter, Grace Quinter Holsopple, once commented:

"As early as 1861, when the first secular high school was opened at Vienna, Ohio, it is a matter of interest that my father, James Quinter, was able to secure five sisters for the first faculty, viz., Rachel and Lettie Day, Mary Craig, Mrs. C. S. Haas, and her daughter Hattie. Lettie Day, the music teacher, was living in Philadelphia when her death occurred; and she is still remembered by the older members of the Philadelphia First Church."<sup>30</sup>

The religious and social upheavals of the nineteenth century resulted in the rise of numerous societies for the improvement of mankind. Under the inspiration of Protestant Christianity, more than 500 denominational colleges were founded. These were organized not only for educational purposes but also for the effective spread of the Gospel. No less than eleven distinct efforts were made by members of the Church of the Brethren to establish schools of higher education before a permanent institution was inaugurated at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.<sup>31</sup> The Brethren's Normal School and Collegiate Institute opened its doors in 1876 under the direction of John B. Brumbaugh, H. B. Brumbaugh and A. B. Brumbaugh. In 1896, the institution changed its name to Juniata College.

The purpose of the college was to provide a center for the education of children of the Church of the Brethren. The charter of the institution states its purpose:

"to perpetuate good and sound learning distinguished by Christian principles that the youth of the Church and the State may be trained for such service as an enlightened mind and quickened conscience may lead them to render to God and man."

One of the men associated with Juniata College in its early years was James Quinter, who was also a promoter of mission work. In the Church of the Brethren, mission work and educational work had their origins almost simultaneously.

Elizabethtown College began under the influence of some leaders who were associated with the North Atlantic District. One of the early promoters of a college for southeastern Pennsylvania was J. G. Francis. In district meetings he frequently referred to himself as "the father of Elizabethtown College." He and others led the movement to establish a college in protest to the music and physical education requirements at Juniata College. Residing in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, he was eager to locate the college close to Philadelphia. Ralph W. Schlosser shows in his volume, *History of Elizabethtown College, 1899-1970*, that J. G. Francis and J. Howard Ellis demonstrated interest in locating a Brethren college in Norristown (1899).

Another advocate for a Brethren college in southeastern Pennsylvania was Jesse C. Ziegler who was influential in many congregations of the North Atlantic District. As a result of his efforts, Elizabethtown College opened its doors in November, 1900, with a faculty of three and a student body of six. Jesse C. Ziegler served as chairman of the Board of Trustees from the day of its organization until the time of his death (1900-1918).

George N. Falkenstein, a pastor of the Germantown Church of the Brethren, became the first administrator and a teacher of the new college at Elizabethtown.

At the time of the organization of Elizabethtown College, no boundaries were established between it and Juniata College. Very early in the history of the new eastern college, members of the Board of Trustees were appointed to solicit funds from churches of the North

Atlantic District. George N. Falkenstein requested support from five district churches: Green Tree, Upper Dublin, Amwell, Philadelphia First and Germantown. Nathan Hoffman visited members associated with the Coventry and Parker Ford churches. Jesse C. Ziegler solicited funds from the Mingo, Hatfield, Indian Creek, Springfield and Little Swatara congregations.

On October 30, 1913, the Brooklyn Church of the Brethren requested the District Conference to consider the advisability of assuming control of Elizabethtown College as the property of the church. A committee, consisting of D. W. Kurtz, A. J. Culler and W. S. Price, conferred with a committee from Eastern Pennsylvania. The committee from the North Atlantic District recommended favorable action on the request but the recommendation was spread on the *Minutes* for several years. On October 25, 1917, the North Atlantic District Conference decided to refuse control of the college property.

In no small measure this decision hinged on the close association which the North Atlantic District had with Juniata College and the continuing controversy concerning the order of dress.<sup>32</sup> Memberships at the Philadelphia First Church, Germantown, Royersford and Coventry were influential in the decision to ally the district with Juniata College. The leadership of J. M. Fogelsanger, Martin G. Brumbaugh, T. T. Myers, D. W. Kurtz and C. C. Ellis were decisive in winning the district's support for the Huntingdon school.

In 1922, a strong appeal came from M. G. Brumbaugh for a committee to meet with the Juniata College Trustees. The purpose of the meeting was to confer and by prayerful counsel find ways by which the College could be made to serve the Church of Jesus Christ. The District Board of Christian Education consulted with the trustees.

A survey of pastors from the North Atlantic District reveals that many have been graduates of Juniata College. Among these may be listed Ross D. Murphy, Florence F. Murphy, Glen E. Norris, Philip E. Norris, Donald L. Robinson, Paul M. Robinson, Clarence H. Rosenberger, W. Clemens Rosenberger, H. Stover Kulp, Alvin S. Alderfer, Jacob Dick, Wayne Dick, Ivan Fetterman, David K. Hanawalt, D. Howard Keiper, Berkey E. Knavel, Philip M. Kulp, C. Albert Guyer, John W. Lowe, Jr., Thomas E. Shoemaker, Lloyd B. Stauffer and Jesse L. Stayer.

Juniata College has a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees and has never sustained more than a supporting relationship to the district. In 1940, districts which supported the college were invited to nominate one trustee each for a three-year term. This right was granted to the North Atlantic District at a time when the church support for college amounted to \$43.60. Within a five-year period the support from congregations increased to \$1,447.15. Elmer W. Rosenberger, a member of the Germantown Church, was elected by the district to serve on the Board of Trustees.

In past decades there was a requirement that seventy-five per cent of the trustees were to be members of the Church of the Brethren. Current

requirements are that fifty-one per cent of the trustees must hold membership in the denomination. Since the college began in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, the following persons from the North Atlantic District have served as trustees:

Members-at-Large.

John Harley, 1878-1881  
 Joseph Fitzwater, 1880-1886  
 Mary A. Grubb, 1881-1884  
 Martin Grove Brumbaugh, 1884-1924  
 Jacob T. Myers, 1890-1915  
 Mary Schwenk Geiger, 1895-1917  
 Frank F. Holsopple, 1897-1899  
 John Mervin Fogelsanger, 1914-1936  
 Frank C. Foster, 1917-1935  
 Harry S. Sieber, 1919-1927  
 Harvey S. Replogle, 1920-1933  
 Ross D. Murphy, 1926-1929  
 George C. Griffith, 1933-1946  
 William S. Price, 1936-1949  
 Philip Markley, 1936-1937  
 Bayard Hedrick, 1939-1944  
 William I. Book, 1951-1954  
 Lester M. Rosenberger, 1952-  
 Florence F. Murphy, 1963-1968

District Trustees

Elmer W. Rosenberger, 1940-1943  
 Irwin S. Hoffer, 1943-1946  
 William I. Book, 1946-1949  
 D. Howard Keiper, 1949-1952  
 Lester M. Rosenberger, 1952-1955  
 Ivan C. Fetterman, 1955-1958  
 Robert M. Barr, 1958-1961  
 Stanley L. Davis, Sr., 1961-1964  
 John R. E. Hoover, 1964-1967  
 Wayne H. Dick, 1967-1970  
 Robert L. Mohr, 1970-1973

An unwritten gentleman's agreement developed between Juniata College and Elizabethtown College concerning geographic territory. Elizabethtown College fostered church relations with the Eastern and Southern Districts of Pennsylvania and Juniata College accepted the Middle, Western and North Atlantic Districts. In 1948, Edgar M. Detweiler, a former North Atlantic District pastor, became part-time Director of Church Relations for Juniata College. In 1954, Clarence H. Rosenberger, a former Germantown Church member, became the full-time representative to promote college enrollments and to solicit support for the college.

Juniata College received a large share of the Abram H. Cassel collec-

tion of books, manuscripts and broadsides. In 1943, in commemoration of the bicentennial of the first edition of the Christopher Saur Bible, the Juniata College library exhibited items from the Saur collection. Among the items which were displayed were the 1743 edition of the Bible, the 1763 and 1776 editions of the Bible, a copy of the single sheet prospectus which Saur circulated two years prior to the publication of the first edition, an almanac from the Saur press from the year 1749 and two manuscript letters in English written by Christopher Saur in 1755 to Governor Denny of Pennsylvania concerning the treatment of German immigrants.<sup>33</sup>

Juniata College received its largest gift from a graduate and a long-time resident of the North Atlantic District. J. Omar Good, an active member of the Philadelphia First Church and a former assistant to the president of William Mann Printing Company, willed a million dollars to the college at his death in 1973. Part of the gift was used to endow a chair for an outstanding teacher of Evangelical Christianity at the college. He also donated a physics laboratory for the school's Norman Brumbaugh Science Complex a few years before his death.

Juniata College has had seven presidents in its history. J. M. Zuck (1876-1893), J. H. Brumbaugh (1876-1893), Martin G. Brumbaugh (1893-1910, 1924-1930), I. Harvey Brumbaugh (1896-1924), Charles C. Ellis (1930-1943), Calvert N. Ellis (1943-1968) and John N. Stauffer (1968- ) have held the office. Two of these administrators, M. G. Brumbaugh and C. C. Ellis, were active in the life of the North Atlantic District.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE REUNITED DISTRICT

#### Regional and District Programs

A reunited district in the eastern portion of Pennsylvania seemed inevitable. The forces which once separated the districts into two unequal sections were soon dissipated and the conditions which led to the reunion began to emerge after the separation. It was natural for the North Atlantic District to seek reunion since it was once a part of the territory of the Eastern District (1866-1911). Its long history of association with the churches of Eastern Pennsylvania and its geographical proximity led it to seek reunion.

The factors which led to the division in 1911 soon spent their force. The increasing urbanization of American life and the mobility of its population led to a breaking down of sectarian standards in church life. For a number of decades, a movement of population toward urban centers led to the growth of city churches. The Philadelphia congregations attained their highest Sunday School enrollments in the several decades between 1915 and 1935. Members of the Church of the Brethren, following the movement to the city, at first identified themselves with churches of their own denomination. In time, denominational feelings declined and members of the Church of the Brethren began to associate freely with churches close to their own neighborhoods.

A mobile population began to work to the disadvantage of the church. Brethren congregations, once established in a neighborhood, tended to remain while the population changed. A denomination which stressed community life soon found itself dealing with changing communities. Jesse D. Reber once noted that population mobility "has made it increasingly difficult for a sectarian church to follow its members"? Outcries were frequently heard in the 1920s and 1930s that the Brethren were losing too many members to other denominations.

In the face of changing social conditions and the disorganization created by wars, Protestant people began to recognize their common bonds. Various Councils of Churches arose to unite Christian forces of communities about common goals. At a time when Christian principles were widely challenged, churches of various denominations began to enter cooperative ministries. Church Councils coordinated overseas relief and reconstruction programs, services to refugees and church extension ventures. In 1944, Ross D. Murphy served on the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission which helped to alleviate tension-filled situations as black citizens moved into the city to work in war plants.<sup>2</sup>

Members of the Church of the Brethren discovered that their own witness could be broadened by cooperation with others. In 1957, an Annual Conference committee recognized that "the Church of the Brethren has significantly increased its cooperation with other peace

churches and movements during the past fifteen years.''<sup>3</sup> Cooperative ministries were conducted with Church World Service, the National Board for Religious Objectors, the National and World Council of Churches and the Continuation Committee of the Brethren, Friends and Mennonites. Denominational prestige gradually made way for the interests of interdenominational witness.

There was resistance to the denomination's participation in these cooperative movements of Christianity. Much of the resistance centered in the eastern sections of Pennsylvania. When Norman J. Baugher, the General Secretary of the Brotherhood Board, visited with the North Atlantic District in 1967, he spoke at the Drexel Hill District Conference on the theme, "The Church of the Brethren As I See It." He tried to allay the fears of many Brethren who were anxious about the conciliar movements, the failure of the church to retain the values of its peculiar Brethren heritage and the differences which arose over the church's approach to public and social affairs. He made the following observation about the denomination:

"My personal assessment is that if the stance in our brotherhood shifts very visibly toward the conservative, the strictly personal, the predominantly traditional and withdrawal from cooperation and encounter with other churches (and by such shifts to turn inevitably inward and away from the world), the Brethren will have ceased to be a church of useful servanthood to God, according to the highest and clearest vision of our heritage."<sup>4</sup>

The denomination formed its own cooperative program in the nature of a field program. Executive secretaries, known in the beginning as field men, were employed by regions to promote district activities and to interpret brotherhood goals to the local churches. On July 10, 1942, the Board of Christian Education of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania voted to employ an executive secretary who could devote his time to the development of the church program. The trustees of Elizabethtown College passed a similar resolution on July 18, 1940, and agreed to provide office space for the new work.

Galen C. Kilhefner (1907-1974), who was active in youth and camp work, was elected to serve as the first field man for the Eastern and Southern districts of Pennsylvania (1942-1946). Donald M. Snider (1915- ) also an active youth worker, ministered as field man for the territories assigned to Juniata College (1942-1944). Field work developed from convictions of the 1920s that ties between the local church and the General Brotherhood Board needed to be strengthened.<sup>5</sup> When the brotherhood was organized into five zones (1940) and designated regions a year later, the field program was immediately inaugurated.

Four basic purposes were adopted for the field program in 1941:

1. To create an executive for the district boards to unify the approach to the local churches;
2. To designate a promotional man for district activities;
3. To visit the local churches as supervisors in order to strengthen the program; and

4. To interpret the brotherhood program to the district and local churches.

Levi K. Ziegler (1888-1975) succeeded Donald M. Snider as field man in the Juniata territory when Bro. Snider became the youth director of the brotherhood (1944-1951). As a mature pastor, Bro. Ziegler was able to give direction to regional conferences which met with representatives from the five cooperating districts. A program which emphasized adult work, Brethren Service ministries, Christian Education, youth work and missions was important in his responsibilities. He also laid the foundations for a pastoral placement program by the district executives.

A new plan of regional organization was created on September 9, 1946, in a meeting at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Representatives from the cooperating districts formed a Regional Council to conduct the business of the church. The Council consisted of two delegates from each of the five districts, two college presidents and three members of the General Brotherhood Board. The Council, which met twice each year, sponsored Bethany Summer Extension Schools, Regional Christian Education Workshops, Youth Conferences and Regional Conferences for all church workers. The regional secretary was responsible for the publication of a quarterly *News-Letter* and, when the Annual Conference convened in the Eastern Region, he assisted in selecting the location.

Levi K. Ziegler worked as the field man (1944-1948) and executive secretary of the Eastern Region (1948-1953) until his retirement. For several years he was assisted by David K. Hanawalt (1910- ), a former pastor of the Green Tree Church and Director of Overseas Relief for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches (1947-1948). He assumed his duties as youth advisor and director of Brethren Service activities at a time when sentiment was forming for the creation of executive leadership at the district level (1949-1951).



*David K. Hanawalt*

The regional program continued for eleven more years. Stewart B. Kauffman (1919- ), a native of Reading, Pennsylvania, directed the interests of the regional office from 1953 to 1955. Working with him was Virginia S. Fisher (1908- ), who carried major responsibilities for the development of new approaches to Christian Education. With



*Virginia S. Fisher*

experience in regional work in the Western Region (1944-1946) and the Southeastern Region (1947-1951), for two decades she gave outstanding leadership to the Christian Education programs of churches in the Southern, Eastern and North Atlantic districts (1951-1971). These were important years of transition for many congregations as they moved from programs with basically adult ministries to programs with age-group interests. It was a period in which the denomination began to resort to cooperative planning of curricula with other denominations.

Harold Z. Bomberger (1918- ) succeeded Bro. Kauffman in the regional offices. A native of Annville, Pennsylvania, Bro. Bomberger had experience in pastorates in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maryland. For five years (1956-1960), he led the districts to the point where several were ready to embark on their own field programs. This was a period of increasing interchurch and interdistrict cooperation. When it became apparent that many of the churches of Pennsylvania were ready for their own district programs, Harold Z. Bomberger submitted his resignation in order to accept the pastorate of the McPherson (Kansas) Church of the Brethren (1960-1971). Virginia S. Fisher resigned the regional work in order to become the visiting professor of Christian Education at the United Church of Christ Seminary in Lancaster (1960-1961).

Roy S. Forney (1897-1973) was called from the pastorate of the Martinsburg Church of Middle Pennsylvania to lead the districts during

the period of their merger and field program studies. The Annual Conference report of 1960 stated concerning district realignments, "Swift changes in population, travel, communication and the field program have rendered the present district structure largely obsolete."<sup>7</sup> The Western and Middle districts of Pennsylvania decided to enter their own field programs. The Eastern, Southern and North Atlantic districts met frequently to discuss their future programs. Bro. Forney met with district boards and the Regional Council to consider the future of each district. It was his mission to assist in phasing out the regional program.

In 1960, a Committee of Fifteen from the Eastern, Southern and North Atlantic districts recommended the organization of a Tri-District program, to be guided by a committee of nine representatives. This new committee was authorized to lead the three districts to some decision regarding their own destinies either as independent organizations or as merger districts. At this early date, a strong recommendation was made to the Eastern and North Atlantic district boards to consider a merger. The North Atlantic District had also considered the possibility of a merger with Eastern Maryland and the Mardela District to unite the Brethren of the east coast.<sup>8</sup>

The new Tri-District program brought 101 churches and 27,976 people into a cooperative venture. The Tri-District board surveyed the need for executive leadership in the field of Christian Education for these churches and turned once more to Virginia S. Fisher to become the Tri-District Director of Christian Education. Renewing her work with the districts on October 1, 1961, she was commissioned by the three cooperating districts to develop pilot projects in the field of Christian Education. This program prepared the way for the employment of the Tri-District Executive Secretary and encouraged renewal of the teaching ministry in the churches. These were years of advanced Christian Education courses, recreational laboratories, Youth and Junior High retreats and camp development programs (1961-1971).

The Eastern Regional work came to an end in 1964. Roy S. Forney resigned his leadership to accept the pastorate of the Jennersville Church of the Brethren. Joseph M. Long (1928- ), Director of Youth Work for the brotherhood (1959-1964) and former pastor of the Chambersburg Church of the Brethren (1953-1959), became the Tri-District Executive Secretary on September 1, 1964. Virginia S. Fisher was designated as the Associate Executive Secretary. The new executive secretary met with the North Atlantic District Conference in October, 1964, in the Ambler Church of the Brethren and was formally installed in the work by Lester M. Rosenberger and Wilbur A. Martin. Each of the other co-operating districts conducted similar installation services.

### The Reunited District

In the next few years there were frequent evaluations of the Tri-District program. The districts were trying to decide whether they

should merge into larger units or whether they should develop independent district field programs. In 1966, the North Atlantic District Conference received a report which stated:

"After two years of working cooperatively in the enlarged Tri-District program and in the process of evaluation during the past year particularly, there has been an awareness on the part of the North Atlantic and the Eastern Pennsylvania district boards of their many common interests and concerns. There has also been a growing belief that the mission of the church might be accomplished more fully and adequately if the two districts were united into one district.

"Therefore, the district board requests authorization to participate in joint district boards and commission meetings with the district of Eastern Pennsylvania for the purpose of studying the implications of uniting into a single district.

Wilbur A. Martin, Chairman  
Ronald Hershberger, Secretary

Passed by a voice vote."<sup>9</sup>

The Eastern District of Pennsylvania passed a similar resolution at its conference in the Indian Creek Church in November, 1966. In the several succeeding years, frequent joint meetings of boards and committees brought the districts to a full agreement concerning the need for a merger. The district conferences of both districts agreed to the merger in 1968. Four merger task committees, combining representatives from each district, began to outline goals and organization and merger procedures.<sup>10</sup> Five basic goals were accepted by the conferences of the two districts for a new merged district:

- 1.--The strengthening of congregations as basic units;
- 2.--Providing a nurture in New Testament Christianity;
- 3.--Sharing witness by church extension;
- 4.--Developing servant ministries; and
- 5.--Strengthening relationships to existing institutions.

The committees also projected a series of specific goals for the re-united district. Among these are the following: The establishment of a retreat center for the exploration of the implications of the New Testament faith; the inauguration of at least one fellowship or church each three-year period; the expansion of the work in the Philadelphia area and the development of an united Brethren witness; the growth of new departments and areas of study in the colleges related to the unique concerns of the Brethren; the strengthening of congregational units; greater use of public media to interpret the church's convictions to the wider community; and the development of at least one servant ministry in each local congregation.

A special district conference met in the Coventry Church of the Brethren on April 4, 1970, with 206 delegates from fifty-six congregations. The conference elected a new board of administration to conduct the business of the new district. Aaron G. Breidenstine, a member of the Lancaster Church of the Brethren, was chosen to serve as the first

moderator. Grace Hollinger, of the Harrisburg-Ridgeway Church, was elected clerk of the district conference.

The following personnel from the two districts were elected to comprise the new district board: Galen S. Young, Drexel Hill; Carl W. Ziegler, Elizabethtown; C. Wayne Zunkel, Elizabethtown; Richard O. Wenger, Quakertown; Hiram J. Frysinger, Big Swatara; Guy E. Wampler, Ephrata; Mrs. Charles Weaver, East Fairview; Mrs. Clarence Dubble, Myerstown; Hiram G. Gingrich, Annville; G. Roy Dilling, Drexel Hill; K. Ezra Bucher, Elizabethtown; J. Herbert Miller, Spring Creek; Mrs. Robert Barr, Coventry; Mrs. Charles M. Bieber, Big Swatara; Enos B. Heisey, Spring Creek, Luke H. Brandt, Mountville; Clifford B. Huffman, Lancaster; Norman E. Keller, Midway; Donald W. Rummel, Ambler; Earl H. Kurtz, Elizabethtown; Albert E. Richwine, Harrisburg-Ridgeway; Linford J. Rotenberger, Springfield; J. Clair Gibble, Florin; Robert O. Hess, Chiques; Donald H. Fogelsanger, Lebanon; and Mrs. Dorothy Bucher, Ambler. The new board met on April 28, 1970 in an organization meeting at the Ephrata Church of the Brethren.

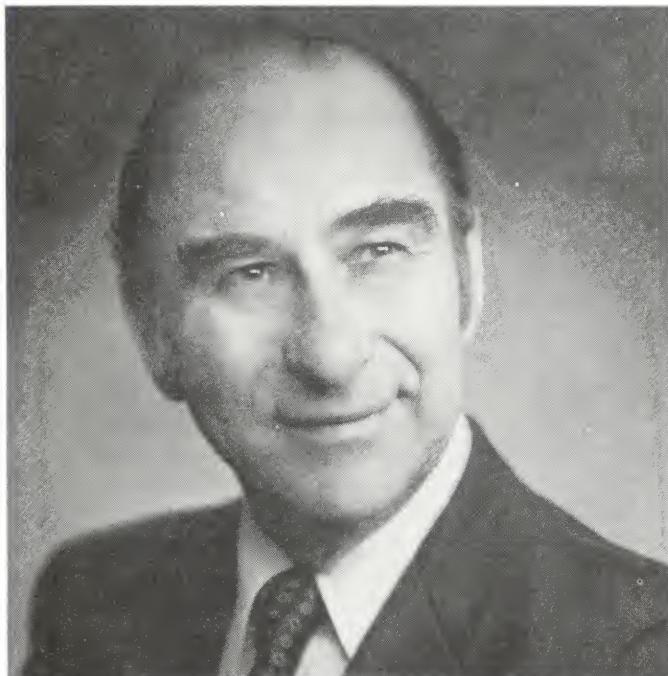
The new district was designated "Atlantic Northeast District" and was incorporated as such in 1970 with offices at 900 S. Arlington Avenue, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Joseph M. Long was chosen to serve as the district executive for the reunited district, his term of office to begin on October 1, 1970.

Approximately 225 delegates met in the Lititz Church of the Brethren for the historic merger conference. Walter W. Eshelman, a member of the Ambler congregation, presided at the last session of the North Atlantic District and Carl W. Ziegler conducted the last meeting for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. The two districts were then officially merged under the leadership of Aaron G. Breidenstine, the conference moderator for the Atlantic Northeast District. At the conclusion of the business meeting on October 10, 1970, Joseph M. Long addressed a banquet in the fellowship hall of the Lititz Church.

During the service of reuniting on Saturday, Frank S. Carper, pastor-emeritus of the Palmyra Church of the Brethren, spoke briefly concerning the history of the division and the life of the districts over six decades. He himself served in many district and brotherhood offices during these decades. He united with the Church of the Brethren three years before the separation of the districts in 1911.

The service of reunion was conducted on Sunday, October 11, 1970, with many participants from the reuniting churches speaking of the contributions each had to make to the total district. The Mingo Church spoke of the mission spirit which began when Kathryn Ziegler became the first missionary appointed from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. The Conestoga Church called for creative ministries in the growing metropolitan areas. The Midway Church stated its belief, as it first did in 1919 in a district meeting query, concerning the importance of women in the life and leadership of the church. The Harmonyville Church stressed the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in modern life.<sup>11</sup>

The speaker for the reunion service was Harold Z. Bomberger, moderator of the brotherhood and pastor of the McPherson Church of the Brethren in Kansas. Bro. Bomberger pointed out that a basic unity existed among the churches of the Atlantic Northeast District in spite of their diversity. This unity centered in their common heritage as Brethren, a common commitment to Jesus Christ as Christians, an openness



*Harold Z. Bomberger*

and an eagerness to seek the mind of Christ and a shared sensitivity to human hurt.<sup>12</sup> He appealed to the new district to discover its strength and usefulness by Christian cooperation.

Virginia S. Fisher submitted her resignation to the district board in 1971. She said,

"Since the transitional phase of the organization of the present Atlantic Northeast District is now over, you may consider this my resignation as the Associate District Secretary, effective August 31, 1971."

Joseph M. Long also submitted his resignation as district executive on April 17, 1971. The board voted to accept the resignations and prepared a statement of appreciation for the services these leaders rendered to the districts. The two executives worked faithfully to advance the total church program during difficult transition years. Their leadership qualities were instrumental in bringing both direction and strength to the new district.

The executive committee of the Atlantic Northeast District met on April 1, 1971, and "voted unanimously that the name of Harold Z. Bomberger be presented to the Atlantic Northeast District Board, April 17, 1971, as our nominee for the executive secretary position." The executive committee consisted of Hiram J. Frysinger, chairman; Guy E. Wampler, Jr., vice-chairman; Albert E. Richwine, treasurer; Clifford B. Huffman; Donald W. Rummel; Luke H. Brandt; C. Wayne Zunkel; Aaron G. Breidenstine; and Hubert H. Newcomer, a consultant from Elgin, Illinois.

Harold Z. Bomberger (1918- ), a resident of Lebanon County and former regional secretary, brought a wealth of experience and education to the district office. He received his formal education at Lebanon High School (1935), Elizabethtown College (A. B., 1943), Bethany Biblical Seminary (B. D., 1946) and Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (S.T.M., 1960). He devoted twenty-five years to the pastoral ministry prior to his call to the office of district executive. In May, 1965, Bethany Theological Seminary awarded him the Doctor of Divinity degree.

Bro. Bomberger's experiences prepared him for the unique ministry he has rendered to the Atlantic Northeast District. He has had special training in the fields of mental health, human relations, personal counseling and evangelism. His pastoral years have enabled him to render valuable services to the churches in the form of counseling and pastoral placement. His leadership at brotherhood levels has given him recognition in interchurch work in the denomination and across denominational lines. He has served as a member of the Kansas District board of administration, president of the Kansas Council of Churches for two years, a member of the General Brotherhood Board and chairman of the Committee on Interchurch Relations. In addition, he was an exchange preacher in the British Isles in 1967 and has toured many lands, including the Middle East, Nigeria and Ecuador.

On May 4, 1971, the Atlantic Northeast District Board called Henry H. Rist III (1942- ) to be the associate district executive, beginning on September 1, 1971. Born in Martinsville, Virginia, he attended Bridgewater College (1960-1962), the University of Virginia (B.A., 1964) and Bethany Theological Seminary (M.R.E., 1967-1969). He taught public school in Virginia (1965-1967) and served as the associate pastor of the Lancaster Church of the Brethren (1969-1971) in Eastern Pennsylvania. He has had special training in youth ministries, group work and Christian Education.

The creation of the Atlantic Northeast District brought the districts back full circle (1866-1970). Churches which once formed a single district were reunited to form one of the largest districts of the brotherhood. The new district blends into an effective union congregations which are new and old, rural and urban, conservative and progressive. Eight congregations trace their rootage to the eighteenth century close to the years of the denomination's beginnings. Nine congregations are less than twenty-five years of age. The district contains churches which

prefer new ways to old and some which prefer old ways to new. In its theology, it represents a wide spectrum of viewpoints. All of these sixty-three congregations have been united about a common purpose. The district structure enables them to do together what they could not do separately and multiplies the force of their witness.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE GERMANTOWN CHURCH



*Pen Sketch of early Germantown Church*

The early Brethren of America identified themselves with other pietist groups. In a new land, their language, customs and religious views forced these people into a settlement where they were assured of ready acceptance. Brethren and Mennonites found a home along an old Indian trail several hours' walk northwest of Philadelphia. These early settlers called their tract of land *German township* and their newly-settled community *German Town*.<sup>1</sup> William Penn signed the charter for the new community on August 12, 1689, six years after the first group of German pietists arrived in the Commonwealth. When the charter was signed, Germantown extended from present-day Wister Street to Washington Lane.

William Penn visited Europe at the time of the beginnings of the Pietistic movement. He was aware of the religious renaissance and the social unrest among the people of Holland and the Rhine River Valley of Germany for he commented on it:

“And I must tell you that there is a breathing, hungering, seeking people, solitarily scattered up and down the great land of Germany, where the Lord hath sent me.”<sup>2</sup>

Penn visited these people and encouraged them to move to Pennsylvania where they could practice their new-found faith without interference from the government.

Penn's primary concern was with populating his new land with industrious and competent artisans. For this reason, he was willing to grant the Germans nearly six thousand acres of land east of the Schuylkill River and beyond the northwestern limits of Philadelphia. Germantown filled so rapidly with settlers that a second German community was begun at Skippack (1701). The Germantown settlers constructed sturdy stone homes along a single street. By 1748, the community had meetinghouses for the Mennonites, Lutherans, Protestant Reformed,

Society of Friends and Church of the Brethren.<sup>3</sup> Many of these German settlers hoped originally to establish a small colony of their own free from the sovereignty of the neighboring English.

The early settlers brought with them from Europe numerous tools, including draw knives, straw knives, cards and hackles. The latter were regarded as proper devices for the manufacture and weaving of linen and woolen cloth. Port authorities objected to the importation of such goods from Europe since there were English laws (1663, 1666, 1686) designed to protect English manufacturers. In spite of the restrictions, many German people succeeded in bringing their tools into Pennsylvania. Within a short time, Germantown was the center for the manufacture of linen and woolen goods.

Brethren who settled here as early as 1719 added their skills to the growing industries. Peter Becker, a weaver of woolen goods in Germany, bought twenty-three acres of ground where he grew cereals and flax for the linen trade. Alexander Mack, Jr. was a stocking- and glove-weaver. At an early date, Germantown was unrivaled in the manufacture of hand-woven stockings. Christopher Saur and his son at one time had under their supervision at least twenty-four different trades or occupations, including stocking-weaving.<sup>4</sup> The Brethren and the Mennonites brought with them into Pennsylvania a stable organization and a tradition of industry which counterbalanced the restlessness of other immigrants in the new land.

James M. Moore observed to an Annual Conference (1905) that the first official name given to the Church of the Brethren in America was tendered by the Pennsylvania legislature. It referred to the church as "The Church of Christ in Germantown known as the German Baptist Brethren."<sup>5</sup> When John Gumre purchased land along the Wissahickon stream in the eighteenth century, he purchased it in his own name and the name of the "congregation of the Brethren."<sup>6</sup>

The original Brethren were all German. Up until the time of the American Revolution, the Church of the Brethren was a German-language church in an English-speaking Commonwealth. Germantown itself became a center for the publication of many German-language books and newspapers. Christopher Saur and his son were active in providing newspapers, almanacs, hymnals and other types of literature to the entire Atlantic seaboard.

The formative years of the Church of the Brethren in the New World were filled with tensions. Penn's policy of inviting numerous sectarian groups resulted in frequent disputes and bitter feelings. Language and custom brought German people into conflict with their English-speaking neighbors. In addition, Pietism assumed some extreme forms and resulted in the rise of mystical groups which threatened the unity of the denomination. H. M. J. Klein believed that the influence of Conrad Beissel's movement in the Conestoga region led Peter Becker and others to initiate the movement toward a church organization in Germantown.<sup>7</sup> Donald F. Durnbaugh believes the first baptisms in the Wissahickon were in reality the beginnings of a period of renewal akin to a Great Awakening.<sup>8</sup>

William I. Book, for many years an active professor, writer and elder of the North Atlantic District, presented an address before the Germantown Church in 1950 in which he described the adversities of the original church:

“The more I learn concerning the clash of sectarian lines and the credence given to mystical rites and fantastic dreams in those formative years of Penn’s colony, the more I wonder how the Brethren, a small group, could organize and establish with such solidarity a distinctive set of beliefs and practices. But they did, notwithstanding the unfortunate defection of Conrad Beissel and the determined efforts of Count Zinzendorf and others to fuse the German sects and religious people into one church.”<sup>9</sup>

The success of the Germantown Church in its first century and a quarter must be credited to its energetic and sage leadership. The Great German Migration (1717-1776) assisted the church’s growth by transplanting European leadership to Pennsylvania. In the eighteenth century, these leaders included Peter Becker (1723-1758), Henry Kalckglasser (1724-1738), Stephen Koch (1724-1739), John Hildebrand (1724-1739), Alexander Mack, Sr. (1729-1735), Alexander Mack, Jr. (1748-1803), and Christopher Saur, Jr. (1748-1784). The devotion and leadership qualities of these men strengthened the church in its crucial beginning years.

Even in the nineteenth century, when the Brethren pursued a sectarian isolation, the Germantown Church was blessed with the abilities of Peter Keyser, Jr. (1766-1849) and Peter Leibert (1780-1812). For ninety years the Germantown Church was the denomination’s only urban meetinghouse. For a number of years after 1813, when the Philadelphia First Church began, the Germantown and Philadelphia congregations shared services and ministers. After Peter Keyser, Jr., died in 1849, the work at Germantown began a steady decline. For the next twenty years there were no resident ministers and deacons often conducted the services.

The Civil War period (1860-1865) was significant for the Germantown membership. On March 25, 1862, the congregation received an organization charter under the name, “Society of the Church of Christ, worshipping in Germantown, commonly called the German Baptists.” After the year 1867, the lovefeast services were neglected, apparently because of the loss of ministerial leadership. The full supper at communion was negelected and the salutation was omitted.<sup>10</sup> A “Bro. Yance” preached for the congregation from 1868 until 1870. When John Fox (1786-1880) was advanced to the eldership by the Philadelphia First Church, he assisted the Germantown congregation with its business meetings and services.

Jacob T. Myers (1851-1915) was not quite twenty-one years of age when he accepted the call to minister to the Germantown membership. Elected to the ministry in 1871, he served the church faithfully from 1872 until 1877. For several years during his pastorate, he assisted L. A. Plate in publishing *Bruderbote* [*The Brethrens’ Messenger*], a Ger-

man-language periodical for German-reading members. When he accepted the pastorate of the Green Tree Church in 1877, J. P. Hetric shared his ministry with the Philadelphia First Church and the Germantown Church (1878-1882).

The Mission Board of Eastern Pennsylvania was requested in 1892 to promote the work at Germantown. Wilbur B. Stover (1866-1930), a student at Temple College in Philadelphia, labored with the membership prior to his missionary endeavors in India. When he began his work in the closing months of 1891, he characterized the church in this manner:

"Take the cemetery away and there is not much left. . . With it all, I believe the place could be built up again, but somebody must go there to stay, and then exercise untiring effort and patience. While the tide goes westward, God bless our eastern churches."<sup>11</sup>

The period from 1891 forward witnessed a renewal of the Germantown congregation in three respects: there was a resurgence of interest in missions; there was an awakening to the historical values of the Germantown site; and there were rich dividends in the arrival of the salaried pastoral ministry.

Wilbur Stover's enthusiasm for missions as the chief work of the church was infectious. Neighboring congregations soon began to support the mission program of the denomination in earnest and there was a growth of mission churches within the district. Roland L. Howe believed that Wilbur B. Stover's enthusiasm for missions was one of the factors which contributed to the division of the North Atlantic District from Eastern Pennsylvania.<sup>12</sup>

With the arrival of George N. Falkenstein (1859-1949) from Mount Morris, Illinois, the church rediscovered its own historical traditions. Bro. Falkenstein moved into *the parsonage*, a stone house erected in 1756 by Philip Weaver. This building, pictured on the inside cover of this volume, had been used as a rented residence and as the site of select school taught by Susan Douglas. It was used as the parsonage from 1893 to 1901 and was dismantled early in 1905.

George N. Falkenstein's passion for history expressed itself during his pastorate in Germantown (1893-1901). He traced his own ancestry to Philadelphia where his German forbears had come in 1761 and where his grandfather Jacob Falkenstein was born in 1775. Under his direction, the Germantown Church began to maintain accurate records for the benefit of future historians. He gathered notes and composed his *History of the German Baptist Brethren* (1901). This same meticulous concern for accurate records was applied to the historic cemetery to the rear of the meetinghouse.

The cemetery was not used for burials until 1793, although the ground had been purchased in 1760 for the sum of ten pounds.<sup>13</sup> Many Philadelphians succumbed to the deadly yellow fever epidemic which raged in 1793. In the face of a dire emergency, the Germantown Church membership opened the cemetery grounds for mass burials.<sup>13</sup>

The cemetery was enlarged in 1804 with the purchase of an adjoining

lot so that members could drive in with a "wagon or cart to the stable, and down to the graveyard, if needs be; and also to enlarge the graveyard at a future date."<sup>14</sup>

Alexander Mack, Sr., was buried in the Upper Burying Ground in Germantown in 1735. At the suggestion of George N. Falkenstein, the remains of the church's founder were returned to the Germantown cemetery and placed in plot number fifty-eight. The transfer was made on Tuesday, November 13, 1894, and a brief memorial service was conducted at the new plot in the Germantown cemetery. A Scripture was read, a prayer offered and a hymn was sung in the presence of twenty-five descendants of Mack. T. T. Myers, pastor of the Philadelphia First Church, assisted in the memorial service.



*Alexander Mack Marker*

Alexander Mack, Sr., expressed the desire to have his grave unmarked. "They might some day want to erect a monument over my grave", he said. The Upper Burying Ground contained a small blue slate marker conveying in German the simplest reference to a life: "Here rests the bones of A.M., born 1679, died 1735." When the remains were transferred to the Germantown Church cemetery, a new and larger marker was erected to honor the founder of the Church of the Brethren.

Sheds on the church property were gradually removed. The driveway to the sheds was closed in 1889 when the church trustees sold a

property on Sharpnack Street for \$600. Some sheds had been removed earlier to provide more room for burials (1884).

The only church building in use in 1893 when Bro. Falkenstein arrived was the one-room stone structure built in 1770. This original building, used for the first time on July 8, 1770, consisted of three levels: a loft, for accommodating overnight guests; the small sanctuary; and a basement for the preparation of the lovefeast. This building stood some distance from Germantown Avenue since the Pettikoffer house, dismantled in December, 1861, stood in front of it. About 1880, the meetinghouse was remodeled by removing the loft and elevating the eight-foot ceiling. The windows were arched and new benches were installed.

In 1896-1897, a new stone sanctuary was erected to the rear of the original meetinghouse. Jacob Z. Davis, a direct descendant of Alexander Mack, was present to dedicate the new addition as a memorial to his mother. Services of dedication were conducted on May 16, 1897, with George N. Falkenstein and Martin G. Brumbaugh as speakers. Although the membership at the time was only forty-seven, the services on this day were crowded. The new building was erected at a cost of \$8,000.

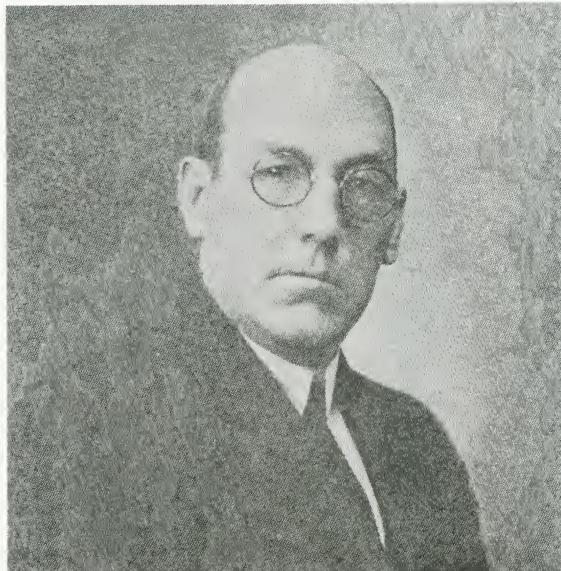
The Germantown congregation received financial support from the General Missionary and Tract Committee of the brotherhood during Bro. Falkenstein's pastorate. In 1895-1896, the congregation received \$292.23 in assistance.<sup>15</sup> A statement to the Annual Conference in 1900 indicated the congregation had an average attendance of twenty at its worship services and forty-one at its Sunday School.<sup>16</sup>

In 1900, George N. Falkenstein and his wife, the former Eva Shellenberger, moved to Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, to become president of the college which he helped to establish.<sup>17</sup> He continued to minister to the Germantown Church until a successor was found.

T. T. Myers (1901-1902) preached in Germantown for a year. During his pastorate the congregation decided to receive basket offerings at each regular church service. Walter S. Long (1902-1904) succeeded Bro. Myers and served until he assumed the pastorate of the First Church of the Brethren in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

A new era of growth and change came to the Germantown Church under the aggressive leadership of Milton C. Swigart (1868-1939). As a teacher, evangelist and minister, he was active in the life of his home congregation at Spring Run near McVeytown, Pennsylvania. For nineteen years he was a teacher in the public schools. While he was active in the Spring Run congregation, he was united in marriage to Anna Clinger Swigart, daughter of Levi and Rebecca Swigart.

Records kept by Bro. Swigart from the time he was called to the ministry in 1894 show that he preached his first sermon in the Germantown Church as a guest on November 29, 1905. He accepted the call of the congregation and began a long and successful pastorate on April 4, 1906. The terms of the agreement were that he should receive \$60 per month and have the use of the parsonage. The congregation constructed a parsonage next to the church grounds in the spring of 1905 at a cost of \$3,000.



*Milton C. Swigart*

Bro. Swigart commented on the early years at Germantown: "We came to Germantown and found a Sunday School of from forty to fifty members, and a church membership of about sixty, with only one half of these members actually doing service."<sup>18</sup>

Anna C. Swigart (1870-1923) was active in many phases of the church's life. She promoted women's work organizations in the local church, the district and in the brotherhood. In 1911, a statement from the congregation said, "We believe that these Aid Societies are part of the church and much good can be done by them."<sup>19</sup> As evidence of the good the societies could do, the Sisters' Aid Society in 1910 purchased a carpet for the church, paid for two dozen new hymnals, paid for a nurse for a sick sister and gave thirty dollars for six months' support to a native school of India.

Sister Swigart's name was associated with such organizations as the Cradle Roll, the Mothers' Meeting, the Red Cross Auxiliary and the Sisters' Aid Society. She contributed articles to *The Gospel Messenger* on behalf of women's work in the brotherhood and was preparing a report for the Annual Conference at Calgary, Canada, when she died of pneumonia on January 7, 1923. She was president of the Aid Society in the brotherhood from 1915 until 1923. In appreciation for her unusual ministry, the membership framed a beautiful embossed copy of a memorial to her and placed it in the church.

The only child of the Swigarts was Esther Naomi. As a coworker with her parents, she succeeded in organizing the children and the youth of the Germantown congregation into active, serving groups. In 1917,



*Anna C. Swigart*

while she was still a student at Juniata College, she supervised Senior and Junior Eight-Week Clubs. These organizations devoted their meeting time to Scripture-reading, singing, Bible study, relief activities and recreation. In this year, these clubs contributed \$60 to Emergency Aid.

Although much of the growth of the Sunday School was credited to the inauguration of the Home Department (1912) and the Cradle Roll, Junior Endeavor classes and Intermediate work contributed to the growth. By 1926, the congregation had four separate Christian Endeavor departments, covering primary, junior, intermediate and youth work. A report for 1927 declared that "the attendance is around a hundred every Sunday evening."<sup>20</sup> The Church *Directory* for the year 1927 proclaimed, "We have the largest Young Peoples' Society in Germantown and one of the largest in the city."

A burgeoning membership and attendance created the need for additional space. The church council developed plans for an addition to the building and a cornerstone for a six-room Sunday School unit was laid on July 18, 1915. The Germantown Church appealed to the brotherhood through *The Gospel Messenger* for \$4,000 of the \$8,000 which was needed to complete the project.

In 1922, a new Sunday School room was added to the church basement to accommodate the growing membership. On March 4, 1924, the church council voted to purchase a plot of ground at the

corner of Montana Street and Germantown Avenue to allow for future expansion. P. R. Markley, the Sunday School superintendent, indicated that the Sunday School alone contributed \$16,000 of the \$22,000 which was paid for the lot. A mortgage-burning ceremony was conducted on January 10, 1928.

The growth of the Germantown congregation must be attributed to a pastoral ministry which was evangelistic in nature. The membership was widely scattered through the city and attendance at the services amounted to fifty per cent of the membership.<sup>21</sup> In the period prior to World War I, Billy Sunday set the nation and the city astir with his flamboyant evangelistic methods. A member wrote of the effects of these meetings on the Germantown Church: "One man came into the church after the services and asked for prayer and baptism after he had attended the Billy Sunday Tabernacle."<sup>22</sup>

The church experienced a phenomenal growth between 1906 and 1934. Beginning with a membership of sixty in 1906, it grew to 126 in 1912 and 186 by 1915. The membership continued to rise so that it was 426 in 1930 and was reaching its peak of 463 members in 1934. The Sunday School showed the same accelerated growth. The enrollment was 225 in 1912 with an average attendance of 140. By 1914, the attendance climbed to 225. A report for October 2, 1922 stated, "For Rally Day, we had 384 in Sunday School."

The original 1770 meetinghouse was built beyond the community of Germantown. As the years passed, land around the church was taken up by new settlers. As late as 1924, a new street was being cut through very close to the church. New homes were being built and new families were moving into the neighborhood. During the 1920s, when Christianity was being challenged by many new forces, the Germantown Church was experiencing growth.

The church paused frequently to observe its anniversaries. It added plaques to commemorate its ties with the denomination's founders. On April 9, 1911, a brass tablet was unveiled as a memorial to Alexander Mack, Sr. "This tablet is a gift of seventy-five persons, each person giving one dollar",<sup>23</sup> said a correspondent to *The Gospel Messenger*. Three of the contributors were direct descendants of Alexander Mack. M. G. Brumbaugh was present to speak at the time the plaque was unveiled. He observed, concerning the denomination's beginnings in America, that the church was not instituted immediately since the colony's roads were poor and the brotherhood had no ordained minister. Peter Becker, who led the singing, was not yet ordained.

By 1911, the Germantown Church had three memorial plaques. The first, placed in 1899, honored Christopher Saur, Jr. and his father. A second, placed in 1909, was dedicated in memory of Peter Keyser, Jr., and his wife. The third, dedicated to Alexander Mack, was inscribed as follows:



In Memory of



**ALEXANDER MACK**

the first minister

and organizer of the

**CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

**Born in Schreisheim, Germany . . . . . 1679**

**Baptized in the River Eder. . . . . 1708**

**Organized the Church at Schwarzenau. . . 1708**

**Came to America. . . . . 1729**

**Died in Germantown. . . . . 1735**

**He was a man of strong conviction and a careful and devout student of the Bible. He organized a church with no creed, but with all the**

**New Testament ordinances as taught by**

**Jesus and His immediate followers.**



A Bicentennial program on November 12 to 16, 1919, marked the arrival of Peter Becker in America and recalled the congregation to the strength of its original faith. T. T. Myers spoke concerning the life of Peter Becker and gave a history of the Germantown Church.

On December 23, 1923, the church celebrated the bicentennial of the first baptism in America and the organization of the Germantown Church. Dr. Adam Geibel, a blind composer and musician of Philadelphia, gave an address on "The Meaning of Christmas To The World." Martin G. Brumbaugh, J. S. Noffsinger and C. C. Ellis were guest speakers for this memorable event in the congregation's life. On December 25, 1923, the church observed its lovefeast with 153 communicants and six visiting ministers. Letters of greeting were also read from the brotherhood.

Church records show that many visitors have come to the church to share in its historical memories. In 1926, when George N. Falkenstein returned to preach, he stated that he recognized only the face of Francis Price, a deacon and church member when Bro. Falkenstein was pastor. Bro. Price presented four candle holders to the congregation, reminding the members that these had been used in the pulpit in the earlier decades of the congregation. In 1926, a Rev. Quinley, pastor of the Morristown Methodist Church of New Jersey, and a direct descendant of Alexander Mack, addressed the congregation.

A Christopher Saur Bicentennial observance was held in the Germantown Church on May 30, 1938. Members of the various branches of the Brethren Church in America met to mark the unveiling of a new marker over the grave of Christopher Saur, Jr. Speakers for this event included George N. Falkenstein, M. A. Stuckey, Roland L. Howe, A. V. Kimmel, C. C. Ellis, Charles D. Bonsack, J. N. Cassel and Milton C. Swigart.

Pastor Swigart remarked at the dedication of the Saur marker:

"It is sometimes said that we are forgetting the old landmarks. I reply that we ought to forget them. They belong to the foundation and, as the temple rises, the foundation disappears from view.

"We ought to surpass our fathers both in knowledge and in achievement, but that does not mean the rejection of the fundamental doctrines on which they built. We use the same alphabet and the same multiplication that they did, but we ought to excel them in literature and arithmetic. We are to forget them as the poet forgets the alphabet in writing the poem; as the singer forgets the printed notes in the song she sings; as the artist forgets the canvas and the brush in the picture he is painting. Of course the alphabet and notes and canvas are present and without them the poem and the song and the picture would not be possible, but they do not enter the consciousness of the artist."<sup>24</sup>

In this bicentennial year a marker was also placed in the community of Germantown at the site of the Saur foundry and printing establishment. A bronze marker was attached to the old parsonage of the Trinity Lutheran Church opposite the location of 5255-56 Germantown Avenue where Christopher Saur, Sr., founded his printing and publishing home in 1738. The marker was placed on the site where Jacob Bay, aided by the Saurs, operated the first American type foundry, beginning in 1772. The land on which the Trinity Church was constructed was originally owned by Christopher Saur II.

The period following World War I brought upheavals to the social, economic and religious life of the nation. No period like it existed before in the nation except possibly in the era from 1854 to 1877. In the 1920s, religious and racial prejudice grew intense and a veritable social revolution occurred. The intolerance which was so evident in society eventually infected church life and threatened the unity of many denominations and congregations. By the 1930's the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy had become negative in character and

differences in viewpoint were seldom tolerated.

The 1930s were crucial in the life of the Germantown congregation. Some of the youth who had been so active in the 1920s began to leave the church under the evangelistic zeal of the Christian Endeavor movement and the influence of the Philadelphia School of the Bible. Esther N. Swigart, motivated by a Fundamentalist-activist faith, began in 1934 a Bible and Missionary Conference for church workers under the name of Bethanna. In time, this movement became a home for boys and girls of broken homes in the Philadelphia area. Some members of the Germantown Church joined in her endeavors.

In 1933, Milton C. Swigart was married to Frances Moyer of North Manchester, Indiana. His last years as pastor were marked by a declining membership. By 1935, the congregation had to readjust its membership rolls to account for the great number who had withdrawn to take up membership with other groups. Between 1935 and 1940, the church lost nearly 250 members in this fashion. On January 11, 1939, M. C. Swigart died of a coronary thrombosis. His personal diary showed that his last sermon was preached on January 8, 1939, on the theme, "The Man With The Ink Horn" (Ezek. 9:4).

M. C. Swigart served the district, the brotherhood and the Germantown congregation for thirty-three years. He had been the secretary of the District Mission Board for nearly ten years. In the course of his ministry in the congregation he baptized 757 persons in addition to 589 baptized elsewhere as the result of his evangelistic meetings. He preached 2,620 sermons in the church. A grateful congregation and district leaders met to honor him in death before his body was laid to rest at McVeytown, Pennsylvania. C.C. Ellis conducted the memorial services both at Germantown and at McVeytown on January 15, 1939.



*Benjamin F. Waltz*

Benjamin Franklin Waltz (1889-1958) assumed the pastorate of the congregation on July 1, 1939. The Board of Trustees and the Deacons of the congregation, acting as the Pastoral Board, interviewed Bro. Waltz and employed him as the supply pastor until the congregation could approve their decision. John S. Landis supplied the pulpit until Bro. Waltz began his pastoral ministry.

B. F. Waltz came to the Germantown Church from the Spring Creek Church of Hershey, Pennsylvania, where he served from 1934 until 1939. He had been a pastor in Western Pennsylvania (1915-1920) and in the Twenty-Eighth Street Church of Altoona, Pennsylvania (1920-1934). Bro. Waltz was born in Manheim, Pennsylvania, the son of Conrad B. and Mary Helfert Waltz. He was baptized (1901) and licensed to the ministry (January 14, 1914) at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren. In 1915, he was married to Mary E. Myers, the daughter of Edward and Emma Picking Myers.

B. F. Waltz ministered to the Germantown congregation during the stress-filled years of World War II. During much of his ministry, he actively promoted the Germantown Church as "the Mother Church in America." He conducted frequent tours about the church, cemetery and Germantown community. In 1940, when Brethren youth returned from a world conference at Amsterdam, Holland, they visited the Germantown Church and gave a first-hand report of their experiences. In the same year, a church note observed, "More than 150 persons, returning from the Annual Conference, stopped to visit the Mother Church of the Brethren in America."<sup>25</sup>

Members of the congregation recalled that D. L. Miller was once given a cup which had been used at the Germantown Church before individual communion cups were introduced in 1917. At the death of D. L. Miller, the cup came into the possession of J. E. Miller. When the Brethren began to search for a symbol of Brethren Service during World War II, they used this historic cup. The hands of J. E. Miller and C. D. Bonsack were joined about the cup against a background cross. In this way, a symbol of the faith and practice of the Church of the Brethren was born.<sup>26</sup>

The congregation was saddened on December 28, 1943, by the death of Elmer W. Rosenberger (1880-1943), an active deacon and Sunday School superintendent of the church. He was a postmaster, a general merchant, a chief clerk for the Reading Railroad and an accountant and office manager of the DeHaven and Townsend banking and brokerage business of Philadelphia. As a church and cemetery trustee of the congregation, one of his last official actions on behalf of the membership was the signing of papers by which the Germantown Church was to be held in trust for the general brotherhood.

The question of preserving the historic Germantown site was raised as early as 1896. In a period of declining membership, some members were disposed to sell the property. One of the descendants of Alexander Mack proposed to buy the entire property for \$25,000. When the church met to discuss the offer in council, it decided instead to appeal

to the brotherhood for a Board of Trust to "hold the real estate occupied by the old church buildings and graveyard in trust forever."<sup>27</sup>

The Annual Meeting encouraged the Germantown Board of Trustees to incorporate in the state of Pennsylvania to hold the church property in trust. The congregation had discussed the feasibility of deeding the entire property to the General Mission Board of the brotherhood (1905). However, on May 24, 1909, a new charter was granted to the congregation with a change in name. In accordance with an Annual Meeting decision (1908), the name of the congregation was changed to "Church of the Brethren of Germantown in the City of Philadelphia." A new Board of Trustees was named under the new charter. It consisted of Isaac N. Buckwalter, Milton B. Tyler, Milton C. Swigart, Philip R. Markley, Edward F. Ertle, Howard Shugard and James Martin, Sr.

In 1925, the Brethren Historical Committee of the brotherhood discussed the possible future of the Germantown Church. At this time, the alternatives seemed to be: 1). Have the brotherhood or interested individuals finance the construction of a good house of worship for the mother congregation of the brotherhood; 2). Have the brotherhood, or interested individuals, purchase the old stone church at Germantown to preserve it as a memorial and as a repository of important church documents and relics.<sup>28</sup>

In 1943, a new charter was granted to the Germantown Church. Through the efforts of B. F. Waltz and Philip R. Markley, the title in the real estate and buildings of the property known as "the Mother Church" became invested with the brotherhood "if and when any differences in the congregation should ever arise tending to divert such property from its original purpose in the brotherhood."<sup>29</sup> In the 1940s, subversive groups acted to assume ownership of church properties in various sections of the brotherhood. As late as 1949, delegates from the North Atlantic District reported that "certain influences and trends of thought and interpretation of the Christian message prevalent in certain sections were mentioned as constituting a threat to the unity of the brotherhood."<sup>30</sup>

In the period following 1940, the historical investments in the Germantown Church were prominently discussed. The community of Germantown, traditionally proud of its colonial heritage, has more than one hundred colonial buildings standing in the vicinity of the Church of the Brethren. The Germantown Church itself was used as a British field hospital during a portion of the American Revolution. In keeping with its historical awareness, the Germantown congregation in 1946 requested the district conference to select a historical committee of three persons to preserve historical materials and to promote locally the aims and ideals of the brotherhood commission. The district responded by appointing W. G. Nyce, John C. Dettra and Mrs. W. S. Price to the district historical committee.

In 1947, the General Brotherhood Board purchased an old stone shop adjoining the property on Sharpnack Street. Sentiment was forming for the creation of a fireproof depository library and museum at German-

town. The plan was to develop the stone building into a center for a historical memorial commemorating the founding of the Church of the Brethren in America. When the sentiment changed and the brotherhood began to look to college libraries as depositories of valuable materials, the stone shop was removed and the ground was leveled.

The church developed its own library and museum. The church membership gathered articles and papers of historical interest. In 1951, sixteen members of the E. H. Lehman family presented a Christopher Saur Bible to the Germantown Church. In 1953, the museum accepted a valuable Bible which had been printed in Switzerland in the year 1729. Early Brethren communion and pewter wares were placed on display in glass cases as reminders of the earlier life of the church.

The church has attracted many visitors. In 1952, sixty persons visited the church on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the Battle of Germantown. The meetinghouse was seven years old when the historic battle was fought among the homes and gardens of the community. The congregation maintained careful records of the visitors who toured the church and the cemetery. In 1946, persons from sixteen states stopped at the church in the course of a few weeks. In 1948, thirty-three members of the Brethren Peace Caravan toured the church and its grounds.

In the years following World War II, twelve church workers went from door to door in the neighborhood, canvassing funds for European relief. Of the \$250 which was collected in this manner, \$150 was directed to Brethren Service.<sup>31</sup> In the 1950s, the congregation remained active with a variety of programs and services. Men's and Women's Work rallies, youth conferences, evangelistic meetings, mission programs and Mothers' and Daughters' luncheons were characteristic of the decade.

One of the memorable events in the church's life was the observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren. More than 200 Brethren gathered on January 1, 1958, to celebrate the denomination's anniversary year. Sixteen pastors from the North Atlantic District united in the worship and fellowship experience. There were delegates from forty-two districts of the brotherhood and a number of regional executives, including Harold Z. Bomberger of the Eastern Region. Seventeen General Board members, five college presidents, one seminary president and twelve members of the brotherhood staff came to celebrate the beginnings of the Church of the Brethren. The complete anniversary year has been memorialized in a volume by Paul H. Bowman under the title, *The Adventurous Future* (1959).

The Germantown congregation observed its own anniversary love-feast and communion on May 4, 1958. Pastor Waltz was assisted in this service by Brethren I. S. Hoffer and Luther J. Lutz.

On Thursday morning, November 20, 1958, Benjamin F. Waltz died. For nearly twenty years he had been the pastor of the congregation and for fifteen years was a member of the District Mission Board. He served as the presiding elder of the congregation for most of his pastorate (1941-1958). Memorial services were conducted at the church on

November 24, 1958 by Nevin H. Zuck. In his memorial address, Bro. Zuck said,

"Forty-five years ago, God called Benjamin Franklin Waltz to be his minister. In these years he served four churches. He was an evangelist and a Bible conference speaker. He baptized well over one thousand persons during his ministry."<sup>32</sup>

B. F. Waltz was interred in lot number ninety-nine in the old section of the Germantown cemetery.

The Germantown Church has had many ministers on its membership rolls since 1911. The following is a list of those who have been active with the church:

H. Vernon Slawter. Installed into the ministry on January 23, 1920.

H. P. Breininger. Licensed to preach in 1923 by the Germantown congregation.

Raymond Morris. Licensed to preach on April 5, 1926.

Wilbur Isaac Beahm. Licensed to preach and ordained (October 30, 1925) in the County Line congregation of Western Pennsylvania.

Robert Kerstetter. Licensed to preach in 1934.

Clarence H. Rosenberger. Licensed to preach by the Germantown congregation in May, 1938.

John S. Landis. Licensed to preach on April 3, 1939 and relicensed on April 1, 1940.

H. H. Moyer. Received as an elder from the Reading Church of the Brethren on June 17, 1912.

L. A. Clifford. Received as an elder from the Brethren Church (Progressive) on December 23, 1945.

Samuel H. Ziegler. Received as a member from the Reading Church of the Brethren in 1928. Licensed to preach in 1930.

Irwin S. Hoffer. Moved into the congregation and received by letter in 1930.

John M. Pittenger. Former missionary who united with the congregation after he moved into the Philadelphia area.

At one time, the Germantown community was regarded as a self-sufficient, self-sustaining settlement. It prided itself on its traditions and recalled its associations with colonial aristocracy. By the 1930s, this fortress of middle-class people was invaded by industries and the laboring class. By the 1950s, the community was densely settled by black citizens. A report given in 1965 showed that the area about the Germantown Church was fifty-three per cent nonwhite in a population of 28,667 persons. This nonwhite population came into the community between 1940 and 1965.<sup>33</sup>

The Board of Trustees of the congregation passed a motion on April 8, 1959, to employ a resident minister in spite of the declining memberships. The plan was to have a pastor live in Germantown and to coordinate the activities of the developing Paoli-Newtown mission pro-

ject. Donald E. Leiter, Sr. (1932- ), formerly of the Snake Spring Valley congregation of Middle Pennsylvania, accepted the challenge to minister to the two mission churches. He moved into the parsonage in Germantown on July 15, 1959, and was officially installed into his new position by Lester M. Rosenberger on November 8, 1959. After a brief span of time (1959-1961), Bro. Leiter devoted his energies exclusively to the development of the Paoli-Newtown project.

On September 1, 1961, John D. Ebersole (1889- ) accepted the pastoral role at Germantown. He was installed by district representatives on November 12, 1961. During his brief ministry (1961-1963), the average attendance was forty-nine persons and the lovefeast and communion attendance was fifty-four. The church remained divided over the question of the church's ministry to the community, some preferring integration and others desiring to forsake the location in order to merge with another congregation. The declining membership resulted in a weakening leadership. Bro. Ebersole resigned his work effective on August 31, 1963, to retire to the Brethren Village at Neffsville.

For a few months, Ralph R. Frey ministered to the membership. Meanwhile, the District Board debated the church's future. Discussions centered around the question as to whether it would remain a congregation or become a building.<sup>34</sup> By early 1965, a report came to the brotherhood saying, ". . . it is a church which has a building and no worshipping congregation. It is a museum and not a mission."<sup>35</sup> On April 19, 1964, the few remaining members of the Germantown Church voted to merge with the membership of the Philadelphia First Church of Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania. On May 11, 1964, the Philadelphia First Church voted to receive them.

The Germantown Church implemented a Declaration of Trust on December 6, 1942 and had it recorded on October 23, 1943. This Declaration of Trust stipulated that "if at any time there shall be a variation" in the observances of the rituals, uses and purposes, in that event the congregation "shall surrender its control over the operation of the Mother Church and full legal title to the church property shall be transferred to the Trustees of the General Conference of the Church of the Brethren."<sup>36</sup> The Joint Board of Trustees met at the Germantown Church on July 27, 1964 to make a transfer of the property and its various assets to the General Brotherhood.

In March, 1965, a recommendation came from the Ministry and Home Mission Commission to the General Brotherhood Board that "a program be started at Germantown primarily centered in community service." A Germantown Ministry Advisory Committee had been appointed in 1964. This committee believed that the time was at hand to begin a new and contemporary ministry in Germantown. The committee consisted of the following persons: Donald W. Rummel, chairman, Thomas Riethof, secretary, W. Dean Crouse, Lowell D. Hackman, John R. E. Hoover, Joseph M. Long and Galen B. Ogden.

Ronald Gene Lutz (1935- ), son of Boyd E. and Ruby Florella Lutz of Mogadore, Ohio, moved to the Germantown Church in the fall of



Ronald G. Lutz

1965 to inaugurate a new ministry. As a former minister of Christian Education at the Washington (D. C.) City Church of the Brethren (1959-1965), he was experienced in developing new forms of Christian work. Formerly a member of the Springfield Church of the Brethren of Akron, Ohio, he was baptized (1944), licensed (1954) and ordained (June 14, 1959) in his home congregation. Shortly after his graduation from Bethany Theological Seminary, he was united in marriage to Ila Marie Shewalter of Bremen, Indiana (August 15, 1959). Mrs. Lutz shares responsibilities with her husband in the unique ministry which is being conducted at Germantown since October, 1965.

The beginning years were difficult. The new ministry had to earn the right to be a part of the community. On October 31, 1965, Ronald Lutz went out to the sidewalks to invite youngsters to come into the building for *Trick-or-Treat*. About thirty youngsters responded. In the months which followed, he tried to establish rapport with the police, community leaders and school officials. For many years, the Germantown Church had been the meeting place of whites in the midst of a black settlement. One woman, living close to the church, wondered why "Negroes were welcome now when they had not been for many years."<sup>37</sup> Years of alienation between the church and the community had to be overcome.

The years since 1965 have seen gradual progress. Community residents have assumed leadership roles in the development of the program. Recreation, crafts, athletic events, Daily Vacation Bible Schools, sewing and cooking classes, adult seminars and week-end confronta-

tions have become familiar forms of ministry. In 1969, more than 130 neighborhood children were tutored by more than a hundred persons recruited from nearby Beaver College and from adult and youth groups in the Germantown and Mount Airy neighborhoods.

The ministry is designed to serve the needs of the community. These needs are social, recreational, educational and religious. The objectives of this ministry stated, 'It is envisioned that the beginning ministry should be developed through small study, prayer and fellowship groups. At the opportune time, a worshipping community could be called into being as the needs of the people involved in the program would propose and support.'

The Germantown Ministry is supervised by a board which represents the General Brotherhood Board, the Atlantic Northeast District and the Germantown community. A staff of local workers cooperates with a board of community leaders and area churchmen to promote a community-centered ministry which touches all phases of life. The ministry has been working to heal the wounds developed over many decades. Community leaders have welcomed a church into the area to minister to the total needs of the citizens.

Meanwhile, the old church and cemetery continue to lure visitors. The museum and the grounds remain open to all interested persons. In 1968, a number of youth came to the church to sponsor a work camp. These youth were from Eastern Maryland, the North Atlantic and the Southern Districts of Pennsylvania. During their stay of one week they removed wall paper, patched plaster, and cleaned and painted the walls of the 1770 meetinghouse. They were under the leadership of J. Becker Ginder.

On December 30, 1973, many Brethren gathered to observe an "old-fashioned" Brethren meeting. Under the theme, "250 Years: A Guide to the Future?", many Brethren met to discuss the church's past as it related to the church's future. Participating in this service were Leon C. Neher, Stanley J. Noffsinger, Inez Long, James F. Myer, George W. Landis and Art Gish. W. Dean Crouse, the district moderator, Ronald G. Lutz, the Germantown minister, and Harold Z. Bomberger, the district executive, also participated in the event.

The Germantown Church continues to live! It lives in the memories of those who know its history and traditions. It also lives in the new ministries which are developing to express the Christian spirit to the community. It will continue to live as new groups make their pilgrimages to the original Church of the Brethren in America.

## CHAPTER NINE

## THE COVENTRY CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

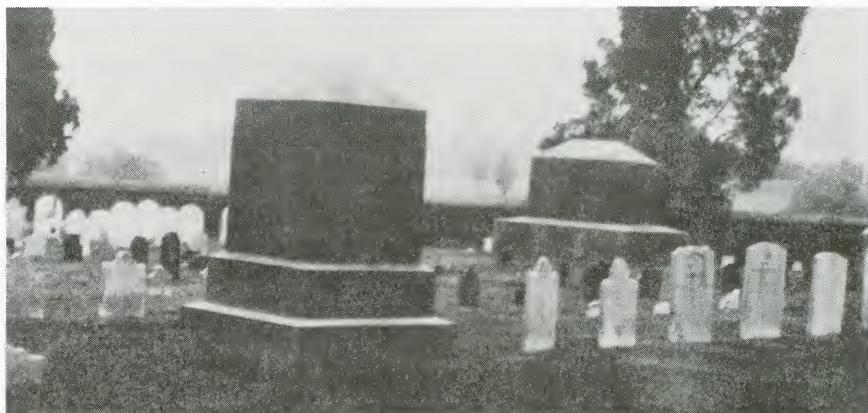


*Pen Sketch of the Original Church Building at Coventry*

Coventry Township in northern Chester County, Pennsylvania, received its name in 1724, the same year in which the Coventry Church of the Brethren was founded. The entire northern region of the county was previously known as the *Skoolkill District*. Members of the Church of the Brethren in this section of Pennsylvania were commonly known as the "Schuylkill Brethren." Samuel Nutt, an early settler and iron worker from Coventry, England, named the district after his native community. North and South Coventry townships were not formed until 1841 and East Coventry Township was separated from North Coventry in 1844.

Ulrich Urner, who came to America in 1708, had three sons: Jacob, Hans and Martin. Martin Urner, Sr. (1695-1755), purchased a tract of land from the Penns in 1718 in the "Skoolkill District" in what is now North Coventry Township.<sup>1</sup> On this 450-acre estate he and his descendants lived for many generations. On the southeastern corner of this estate, later known as Belwood, land was set aside for the Coventry Church of the Brethren. The old Coventry Cemetery was begun in 1743 when Hans Urner died and Martin set aside land on his farm about a mile south of Pottstown, for the interment. Since that time, all the ministers and some of their families from the time of the Urners to Jesse P. Hetric, have been buried in this plot of ground. Mrs. Ida Ellis Hetric, a descendant of Martin Urner, was the last to be buried in the cemetery.

A period of religious awakening in 1722 led to the organization of the Germantown and Coventry congregations. Peter Becker and several



*The Urner Cemetery*

other Brethren made visits into the German-speaking settlements surrounding Germantown in order to foster regular religious fellowship. The first gatherings of the Brethren were conducted in private homes in the Germantown community in 1722 until the winter season interrupted them. These meetings were resumed in 1723 and were kindled to new enthusiasm by a false rumor that the influential Christian Lipe had come to America from Europe. Several families from the Schuylkill district came to Germantown to hear Lipe. Disappointed in their expectations, these families were persuaded by the Germantown Brethren to remain long enough to attend their meetings.

As a result of these first gatherings of the Brethren and the friendships which were formed, the Schuylkill visitors requested baptism. This request led to the elevation of Peter Becker to the eldership, the performance of the first baptisms in the Wissahickon stream, the organization of the Germantown congregation and the observance of the first lovefeast and communion service in Germantown. On Christmas Day, 1723, Martin and Catherine Urner, Henry Landes and wife, Frederick Lang and John Mayle---all from the Coventry district--were baptized as the first converts to the Church of the Brethren in America.

Filled with missionary fervor, in October, 1724, fourteen members of the Germantown congregation set out on horseback and on foot in a second missionary visitation. They "resolved to undertake a general visitation of all their brethren in the whole country."<sup>2</sup> At the home of Martin Urner, Sr., Peter Becker and his associates organized the Coventry Church (November 7, 1724) and baptized two converts, Peter Heffley and Owen Longacre (November 8). Martin Urner, Sr., was chosen to minister to a congregation of nine members, consisting of himself and his wife Catherine, Daniel Eicher and his wife, Henry Landes and his wife, Peter Heffley, Owen Longacre and Andrew Sell.

From 1724 to 1772, meetings of the Coventry Brethren were conducted in rotation among five homes along the Schuylkill River. These members customarily met on Sunday mornings for preaching

services. They remained for fellowship around the dinner tables and, in the afternoons, would engage in song and scriptural conversations. All of these activities instructed the membership and encouraged many neighboring people to unite with the growing congregation.<sup>3</sup> By 1770, the church membership consisted of forty baptized persons representing twenty-two families.

In its first fifty years as a congregation, the Coventry Church became the center for several significant events in the life of the growing brotherhood. In the first place, under the influence of the Inspirational movement of the 1720s, a union service was conducted at the farmhouse of Martin Urner, Sr. (1726). The Coventry, Conestoga and Germantown churches met for a lovefeast and inspirational singing. Conrad Beissel (1690-1768) introduced choral singing as part of the worship experience on this day.<sup>4</sup> It was this type of singing which was introduced into the Ephrata Colony a short time later by Beissel.

The Coventry Church also had the distinction of entertaining the first Annual Meeting of the Brethren. In order to counteract the effects of the German Synod movement of Count Lewis von Zinzendorf, by which he tried to promote church unity among German-speaking people, George Adam Martin and Martin Urner, Sr., called the Brethren into a meeting on Whitsunday, 1742, in the Coventry congregation. Martin Urner moderated this first Great Assembly of the Brethren and established the pattern of a yearly conference among the Brethren.<sup>5</sup>

During the colonial period, the Coventry Church continued to have many accessions. Its growth in membership, however, was constantly thinned by colonization to other sections of Pennsylvania and to the adjoining colonies of Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. By 1732, the price of land in Pennsylvania tripled over what it was a few decades earlier. Good lands were already taken up by first settlers, requiring those who came later to look for land elsewhere.

A succession of able elders-in-charge enabled the Coventry Church to maintain stability and growth through unstable times. When Martin Urner, Sr., died (March 29, 1755), the congregation advanced his nephew, Martin Urner, Jr. (1725-1799), to the eldership. For the next forty-three years he directed the life of the congregation with remarkable success. He became a prosperous farmer and land owner, extending his holdings into Maryland. He christened his estate "Belwood Farms." Here the poor found alms, the discouraged found comfort and the distressed found a friend and heard the gospel. He gave the land for the first meetinghouse of the Brethren at Coventry. The land was given "for the use of a school and meeting place for the said Religious Society (the First Day Baptists) and for no other use or purpose whatsoever."<sup>6</sup> On this land the Brethren constructed a log meetinghouse in 1772.

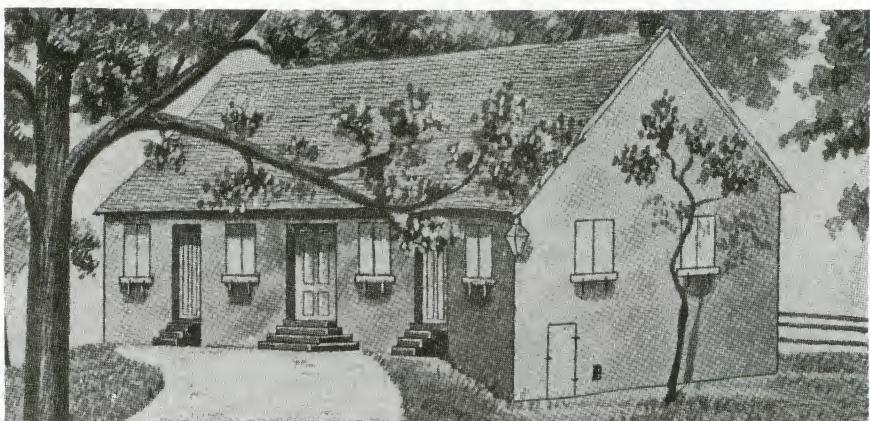
The Coventry congregation has been fortunate in its leadership. Elders who conducted the affairs of the church from its origins until the opening of the twentieth century have been: Martin Urner, Sr. (1729-1755), Martin Urner, Jr. (1755-1799), Jonas Urner (1799-1810), George Price (1810-1823), John R. Price, Sr. (1823-1850), John R. Price, Jr.

(1850-1879), David Keim (1879-1897) and Jesse P. Hetric (1897-1912).

Ministers who conducted the services in the Coventry congregation until the opening of the twentieth century were: Martin Urner, Sr. (1695-1755), Martin Urner, Jr. (1725-1799), Jonas Urner (1772-1812), Casper Ingles ( ? - ? ), Peter Reinhart (1733-1806), Martin Reinhart (1757-1820), Abraham Reinhart (1770-1842), George Price (1753-1823), John R. Price, Sr. (1782-1850), John R. Price, Jr. (1810-1879), Jacob Harley (1786-1842), John Harley (1812-1895), David Keim (1802-1897), Peter Hollowbush (1805-1872), Jacob L. Conner (1834-1924), Isaac Urner Brower (1844-1921), John Y. Isenberg (1840-1917) and Jesse P. Hetric (1843-1927).

Three Annual Meetings of the brotherhood met within the bounds of the Coventry congregation. In addition to the first Annual Meeting in 1742, two meetings were conducted at the home of John Back in 1790 and in 1813. At the 1790 meeting along the Schuylkill, a large gathering discussed the threat of a movement in the brotherhood to return to the use of oaths and military training.<sup>7</sup> At the 1813 conference, the issue of slavery was confronted with courage. The denomination recommended the elimination of slavery by urging its members to refuse to engage in the slave trade and to release slaves which were already owned. The 1813 conference, aware of the threats of war with England, recommended that Brethren avoid voting for candidates for state or national offices "else we might, perhaps, assist in electing such as would afterward oppress us with war."

In 1817, the original log meetinghouse at Coventry was replaced with a church containing stone walls. The building was erected on the same site but an additional half acre of land was acquired from Daniel Urner. The logs from the original church were removed to Cedarville where they were used in the construction of a house. The heating system in the new church consisted of two stoves with flue pipes joined in a large drum over the center aisle. The seats in this building had no back supports.



*Meetinghouse of 1817*

One of the early Sunday Schools of the brotherhood was begun at Coventry in 1842. A Methodist layman, Elizabeth Harley and another young sister of the congregation, held early Sunday School classes in a schoolhouse across the road from the church. For brief periods of time, the Sunday School alternated between the schoolhouse and the meetinghouse. When opposition to the Sunday School movement abated, these leaders began to conduct their meetings in the church building on Sunday afternoons. John Harley eventually assumed charge of the work and gave some permanence to the movement. He would preach at Parker Ford in the morning, drive to Coventry where he would feed his horse and eat a cold lunch and then devote time to preparing the Sunday School lesson.<sup>9</sup>

James Quinter paid a visit to Parker Ford (Lawrenceville) and Coventry in 1856. He made this observation about the church:

"In the church here our beloved John Price lived and died. His labors were extensive and successful. Since his departure the brethren have experienced some trials; but we were very happy to find that peace and harmony are again restored. . .Our visit to Lawrenceville and Coventry was one which afforded us comfort and satisfaction. . ."<sup>10</sup>

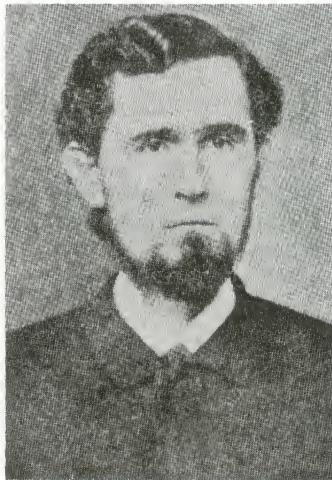
In 1858, *The Gospel Visitor* noted the progress of the church:

"We have had quite a revival in some of the churches east where the Brethren believe in protracted effort. . .At Coventry they have an unprecedented revival. Last Sunday they baptized thirty, and on the fifteenth of May, there will be forty-one more added to the church."<sup>11</sup>

The mission efforts of the Coventry membership was strong from the beginning. The Lumberville Mission at Port Providence was opened by the Coventry Church and eventually led to the formation of the Green Tree congregation (1845). The Parker Ford Church was an outgrowth of meetings conducted in the schoolhouse at Lawrenceville (1840). David Keim, a member of the Coventry congregation, inaugurated the work at Harmonyville (1845). The Pottstown First Church was formed from members of the Royersford, Green Tree, Harmonyville, Parker Ford and Coventry churches residing in the community (1914). For many years, the Parker Ford, Harmonyville and Coventry pastors ministered to these mission points until they became independent congregations.

When Jesse P. Hetric (1843-1927) moved to Parker Ford in 1882, he soon thereafter began to minister to the Coventry Church as its first paid pastor. Recently retired as the pastor of the Philadelphia First Church, he labored with the Coventry membership for the next sixteen years (1882-1898). At first he was paid by private contributions from the congregation. When these contributions declined, he was paid a stated sum of \$400 per year from the church treasury (1889). It was during his pastorate that the Coventry Church endorsed a Sisters' Home Mission organization which cared for the welfare needs of the poor and the unfortunate in the church and community.

Joseph J. Shaffer (1872-1951) succeeded Jesse P. Hetric to the pastoral leadership in 1898. Called to the ministry in the Shade Creek con-



*Jesse P. Hetric*

gregation (1893) of Western Pennsylvania, he was a graduate of Juniata College (1896) and studied Latin and Greek at the Hill School of Pottstown during the year he ministered to the Coventry Church. It was during his brief pastorate that Isaac N. Urner presented to the church his bound volume of *A History of the Coventry Brethren Church*. Bro. Shaffer concluded his services to the church on August 6, 1899.

Ira Calvin Holsopple (1871-1963) began to minister to the congregation on August 25, 1899. A native of Indiana County, Pennsylvania, Bro. Holsopple worked for a time on a fruit farm in New Jersey in order to recover his health (1893-1895) and fellowshipped with the Amwell congregation. He was elected to the ministry by the Sand Brook Church on June 8, 1895. When he completed his formal education at Juniata College (1896), he began to serve the pastoral needs of the Coventry Church. He was united in marriage to Amanda John, daughter of Edwin and Mary Landes John of Kenilworth, on December 27, 1900.

Early in Bro. Holsopple's pastorate, the Coventry membership discussed the installation of a baptistry in the meetinghouse which had been erected in 1890. Members customarily baptized in the Schuylkill River and in a pool of water formed by a stream to the east of the church. As early as 1878 the church was investigating possible new sites for baptisms. When the subject of the indoor pool was introduced in 1896, no action was taken. The church council approved an indoor pool in 1903 and in 1904 it became a reality.

After fourteen and a half years of effective evangelistic efforts in the church and the district, Ira C. Holsopple submitted his resignation (April 1, 1914). A note said of him, "He will continue to work and worship with us for the present and will fill the pulpit at this place until September, when we hope to have Bro. L. R. Holsinger as our pastor."<sup>12</sup> Bro. Holsopple retired from the active ministry to work in general mer-

chandising at a store in Kenilworth close to the church (1915-1918).

Leonard Replogle Holsinger (1882-1970), a native of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, began his ministry at the Coventry Church on September 1, 1914. He was the son of Levi F. and Barbara Replogle Holsinger of Western Pennsylvania. On August 22, 1906, he married Elizabeth Hetrick of Waterside, Pennsylvania. Called to the ministry at the West Johnstown congregation (January 13, 1910), he was ordained in the Red Bank Church on July 20, 1913. During his pastorate at the Coventry Church, he spent three years in study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania.

The pastor and his wife moved into a new parsonage which had been completed in the summer of 1914. The fall lovefeast and communion service recorded 150 persons in attendance. The special offering for the poor collected at the lovefeast service amounted to twenty-one dollars. Following the communion, L. R. Holsinger led the church in a revival meeting: "Last night, after a series of strong sermons on different phases of 'The Second Coming of Christ', fourteen dear young people were 'born of water and of the Spirit' into the Kingdom."<sup>13</sup>

The Coventry congregation instituted several new organizations in 1915. The Ladies' Aid Society, actually begun on February 9, 1884, was reorganized at the church parsonage with an enrollment of twenty-nine members. A life membership fee of twenty-five cents gave the group working capital to begin its ministries. During the year, the women gathered two barrels of clothing to be sent to the Brooklyn Mission and contributed \$25 to be added to the Brooklyn Church Fund.

In the month of April, 1915, a Sunday School convention of workers from the Parker Ford, Harmonyville and Coventry churches met at the Coventry house. These conventions were conducted on an annual basis to foster Christian Education among participating churches. In 1916, the Pottstown Church united with these conventions. One of the first actions of the 1915 convention was to send a telegram to Governor Martin G. Brumbaugh to pledge support to him in his fight for local option laws in the state. A letter of appreciation from the governor was read to the participating church groups in the following weeks.

An installation service of great import to the Coventry Church was conducted on May 24, 1915. Jacob T. Myers and L. R. Holsinger installed H. Stover Kulp into the Christian ministry at the Sunday evening service. A correspondent from the church observed, "Though but twenty-five years of age, we are hopeful of his development for the Master."<sup>14</sup> The son of A. K. and Naomi Kulp, H. Stover Kulp was born on September 29, 1894. His family named him in honor of Wilbur B. Stover, a pioneer missionary of the Church of the Brethren. Bro. Kulp taught three years in the Carter Junior Republic, a school of character-building for wayward boys. After his call to the ministry, he attended Juniata College (1915-1918). He united with the Coventry Church of the Brethren on November 29, 1906.

The church building was "cement-dashed" in 1915 and repainted. One discovers the sense of pride the members had in their church as

one person noted that these improvements "gave it a very attractive appearance, nestled as it is in the little grove."<sup>15</sup> A photograph of the church building was placed on cards to be used by members to invite others to church services.



*1890 Coventry Church building*

The installation of electricity in the church and parsonage in 1916 brought changes in the observance of the lovefeast services. Prior to this time, lovefeasts were conducted each year in the fall. With improved lighting, the congregation began to observe a spring lovefeast as well. The Sunday School also began to show increases in attendance.

"The organized classes have been making efforts to increase their memberships. The Sunday School in May (1916) was 184. The collection runs from \$4.75 to \$5.50 and does not detract from the regular church offerings."<sup>16</sup>

By 1917, 250 persons were enrolled in the Sunday School.

An announcement was made to the church in 1918 that several members decided to dedicate their lives to the work of foreign missions. H. Stover Kulp and Esther E. Kreps made the decision to enter this phase of Christian service. In April, 1917, the church council decided to divide all mission money equally between home and foreign missions. The church gave \$400 to home mission work in order to encourage the new missions recently opened at Pottstown and Wilmington.

Early in 1920, L. R. Holsinger moved to Martinsburg, Pennsylvania, to engage in fruit-farming. He wrote of the Coventry Church, "While we feel that the church has been doing some big things, she still has a vision of greater things to be accomplished before the two hundredth

anniversary in 1924."<sup>17</sup> Until a successor could be found for Bro. Holsinger, Guy N. Hartman (1890-1974), a student at Crozer Theological Seminary, supplied the pulpit from April to June, 1920.

The congregation called Aubrey R. Coffman (1896-1970) from Bridgewater College to begin his ministry on June 1, 1920. He was formerly a resident of the North Atlantic District, having ministered briefly as the pastor of the Bethany Church of the Brethren. He was a member of the Philadelphia First Church (1916-1917). Bro. Coffman and his wife, the former Carrie N. Cassel, soon won the hearts of the membership by their earnestness and devotion. While he ministered to the Coventry congregation, he attended Princeton Theological Seminary, graduating in 1925. Bro. Coffman resigned his work in August, 1926, in order to accept a teaching assignment in Biblical Studies and Psychology at Mount Morris College in Illinois.

The church exhibited fine growth during Bro. Coffman's pastorate (1920-1926). The Sunday School benefitted from the devotion of Margaret Saylor, the superintendent of the Cradle Roll department. Through the efforts of Sister Saylor and her helpers, the department grew to ninety-four babies enrolled. A Babies' Missionary Band collected clothing and distributed it where it was needed in the community. The first Daily Vacation Bible School was organized in 1921. In 1922, the vacation school had an enrollment of eighty-seven with an average attendance of eighty. The church membership at the time was 250 persons.

H. Stover and Ruth Royer Kulp were guests of the Coventry Church on October 19, 1922, about a month prior to their sailing for the African mission field. Little did the membership realize that on June 15, 1924, Ruth Royer Kulp would lose her life in Nigeria, a little more than seven months after her arrival. The Coventry Church bowed in sorrow at a memorial service on July 6, 1924, at which Pastor Coffman spoke on "The Marginal Life" (Col. 1:24).

The church girded itself for its bicentennial celebration. Early in 1924, preaching services were suspended for a month in order that the interior of the building could be renovated. Sunday School classes met in private homes and evening services were conducted in the church basement. A special request of the congregation changed the time of the Annual Ministerial and Sunday School Convention of the district to coincide with the church's bicentennial observances.

The Ministerial and Sunday School Convention brought an impressive number of delegates and visitors to the observances. Worshippers heard Martin G. Brumbaugh speak about "Enduring Principles" (November 7, 1924) and T. T. Myers on "The World's Greatest Need" (November 8, 1924). Ira C. Holsopple and L. R. Holsinger, former pastors, returned to share in the experiences. Linwood Eisenberg addressed the audience on "The Meaning of Fellowship" and J. S. Noffsinger spoke on "The Building of Character." Two prominent district Sunday School workers, Mrs. J. S. Thomas and Mrs. William H. B. Schnell, were present during the Sunday School hour. C. C. Ellis

climaxed the anniversary services by speaking on "The Life of Victory."

In 1926, the Coventry Church council went on record with two protests. One of these was directed against the practice of commercialism at the time of Annual Meetings when clothing, land and refreshments were sold on the meeting grounds. The second protest was directed by the congregation to the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial concerning the opening of the exposition on Sunday. The letter was addressed to the mayor of Philadelphia, asking him to bring the protest to the board. The international exposition opened on Sunday, June 1, 1926, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

"The Coventry Church, near Pottstown, Pa., forty miles north west of Philadelphia, is in want of a pastor. There is an up-to-date parsonage right by the church which is in an oak grove. There are 217 active members, urban and suburban. Any minister wishing to consider the pastorate will please write to Bro. W. W. Kulp."<sup>18</sup>

Alexander McKillip Stout (1888- ) responded to the church's advertisement and was installed as pastor on October 3, 1927. G. W. Kuns was present to give the installation charge to the pastor and W. G. Nyce accepted the commitment of the congregation to be faithful to the work. Bro. Stout came to the Coventry congregation from the Aughwick Church (1923-1927). He was called to the ministry by the Huntingdon Church of the Brethren on May 10, 1922. Bro. Stout was married to Ella Mae Cottrel of the state of Indiana.

The congregational support for the mission programs of the brotherhood continued to grow. In 1924, the church gave \$1,700 to mission work, including the support of H. Stover Kulp in the Nigerian mission work. During the same period, Esther E. Kreps was working on the China mission field and was supported by her home church.

The Coventry congregation was among the leaders of the brotherhood in calling women to the ministry. Madilyn Boorse (1899- ) was born in Pottstown, the daughter of Isaiah S. and Josephine Rahn Boorse. She united with the Coventry Church on November 9, 1913, and was called to the ministry by the church on April 6, 1923, just before she graduated from Juniata College. On June 11, 1924, she was married to Joseph E. Taylor.

Marian Rinehart was baptized at the Coventry Church in November, 1911. A graduate of Juniata College (1930) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (1931), she became a registered nurse in 1933. The First Church of the Brethren of Chicago called her to the ministry and licensed her in May, 1927. She was granted a permanent preaching license by the Coventry congregation in May, 1929. On March 20, 1935, she was married to Martin Scholten of Holland, Michigan.

Marian Rinehart Scholten traces her ancestry to the early ministers of the Coventry Church. Some of her forbears came to America in 1733 with John Naas. After Abraham Reinhart, many of the descendants were deacons in the churches of the North Atlantic District. Maurice

Atlee and Emma Funk Rinehart, her parents, were deacons in the Coventry Church. Her brothers, John Howard and Wilbur A. Rinehart, have also been deacons of the congregation. Her mother's dream that at least one of her children would become a minister was realized when Marian was licensed to preach.

Marian Rinehart Scholten (1902- ) served with her husband, Martin Scholten (1900-1974), in the Christian ministry in the Aughwick congregation (1938-1947), the Lost Creek congregation (1947-1952) and the Springfield Church (1952-1955). Martin Scholten was called to the ministry in the Grand Rapids Church, Michigan (1934), in the same year in which he was baptized. Bro. Scholten passed from this life on August 21, 1974.

When Bro. Stout concluded his pastoral work in 1928, the church extended a call to Trostle P. Dick to serve the membership. He came from the Perry congregation of Southern Pennsylvania, on September 20, 1928. For the next eighteen years, Bro. Dick rendered an impressive and faithful ministry to a growing congregation.

Trostle Perry Dick (1888-1948) was the son of Thomas Perry and Annie Diamond Dick of Wolfsville, Maryland. He united with the Church of the Brethren at Chewsville, Maryland, on February 2, 1899. He was licensed to the ministry in the Waynesboro Church on November 25, 1915. A graduate of Juniata College (1918), he attended Bethany Biblical Seminary, graduating in 1921. Bro. Dick worked for the mission board of the Southern District of Pennsylvania, visiting Sunday Schools of the district and serving part-time in the pastorate of the Carlisle Church of the Brethren (1921-1923) and in the Perry congregation (1923-1928). He was advanced to the eldership on September 11, 1926, in the Perry congregation. In 1910, he was married to Annie Marie Hollinger of Chewsville, Maryland.

The Coventry Church has had an interesting and progressive history of fine music. Like other congregations of the North Atlantic District, the membership once sang without musical accompaniment. A parlor organ was used in 1880 and succeeding years for the Sunday School services only. Gradually, the organ was introduced into the church worship services. Some time before 1919, the organ was replaced with a piano. In 1920, Mrs. Eva Pickel Thomas united with the church and gave new impetus to the music ministry. In the 1920s, the choir increased from a dozen voices to nearly two dozen.

One day the choir members approached the official board of the church and asked for the privilege of placing a pipe organ in the sanctuary. Approval was granted on condition that the choir itself would raise \$500 toward the cost. In 1930, a Moehler pipe organ was installed and dedicated on October 12. Mrs. Thomas was elected to the position of organist, a position she continued to hold for the next twenty-five years.

Mrs. Harold Bealer became the choir director in 1940. She gave direction to the musical program of the church until 1973. During this period, the Junior, Treble and Little Tots choirs were created. In 1973,

Mrs. Robert Saylor became the director of music.

During the eventful years of World War II, the membership was active in support of missions and the Brethren Service programs of the denomination. In 1939, the church hosted the district youth conference during which the role of the Christian in war-time was discussed. A fuel shortage curtailed some church meetings and evening services were discontinued (1943). The youth met in the parsonage and in private homes for their meetings. Women of the congregation gathered at the parsonage to can fruits and vegetables for use by the Civilian Public Service workers at Camp Kane. In 1945, the youth also met at the parsonage and converted used fats into seventy pounds of soap for overseas relief.

In the summer of 1943, eighty-four children in the Daily Vacation Bible School gave an offering of \$32.51 for literature for the African mission field. Christina Kulp, on furlough from Nigeria, assisted in teaching the summer school classes.

The fine spirit of cooperation among the churches of the Coventry area continued through the war years. In 1944, Parker Ford, Harmonyville, Pottstown and Coventry members met in pre-Easter services, concluding with a lovefeast service on Good Friday. In 1945, a group from the Pottstown Church conducted a special evangelistic appeal at the Coventry Church. Later in the same month of January, a group from the Coventry Church presented an evangelistic program in the Pottstown Church.

Velva Jane Dick (1915- ), the daughter of the pastor, entered the mission field in Nigeria as a trained nurse at the close of the war (1945). She served at the Garkida Hospital and Leprosarium from 1945 until 1960. Two of her brothers, Wayne H. and Jacob T. Dick, were called to the ministry earlier by the church.

Trostle P. Dick delivered his farewell sermon to the church on June 23, 1946. On this day, eight persons were baptized. During Bro. Dick's pastorate, he witnessed the church's growth from 200 to 313 members. He helped the congregation to maintain its position as one of the leading churches of the district and the brotherhood. His interest in laymen and youth gave him an effective ministry. His wisdom in administration and counseling made his services valuable to the district and the brotherhood. At his departure, the district conference paid tribute to his ministry with a written testimonial.

On December 1, 1946, D. Howard Keiper began his pastoral work with the congregation. He was installed as pastor on December 11, 1946, with W. G. Nyce officiating at the service. Arthur C. Miller (1886-1947), a former pastor of the Pottstown Church and a member of the Coventry congregation, assumed the pastoral responsibilities between the departure of Bro. Dick and the arrival of Bro. Keiper.

Dewey Howard Keiper (1898- ) is the son of David H. and Margaret Hinton Keiper of Woodbury, Pennsylvania. He united with the Church of the Brethren at Woodbury (1914) and was called to the ministry by the congregation on June 20, 1920, with John R. Stayer officiat-

ing. While he ministered as pastor of the Calvary Church of the Brethren in Philadelphia, he was advanced to the eldership. He attended Juniata Academy (1920), graduated from Juniata College (1924) and obtained his theological training at Princeton Seminary (1928). On September 13, 1926, at Lititz, Pennsylvania, D. Howard Keiper was married to Anna Ruth Graybill of Manheim.

Bro. Keiper came to the Coventry Church with extensive experience in the Christian ministry, having been a pastor for twenty-one years. The church in these postwar years was involved in many ministries and programs under the direction of their new pastor. Service offerings were directed to many overseas relief programs. The church participated in the Heifer Project by purchasing no less than seven heifers. The women of the church packaged clothing, canned jars of food for relief and made Russian blouses for the women of Europe.

The church services were marked by variety. There were peace studies for women under the direction of Anna Ruth Keiper (1947), Juniata Glee Club concerts (1948), lectures about the Amish from Joseph Yoder (1948) and slides by Velva Jane Dick concerning her work in the African Leper Colony (1949). Bassey Minso, a graduate of Bethany Biblical Seminary and a native of Nigeria, visited the congregation on Palm Sunday in 1948. In 1947-1948, the membership gave \$1,918 to mission work.

As the congregation's 225th anniversary year approached, the church board prepared for church expansion and the anniversary celebration. The church council of 1949 approved a Lord's Acre project to assist with the fund-raising for a proposed building program and to promote increased support of Brethren Service work. Strawberries and sweet corn were planted on land acquired for the project.

Paul H. Bowman, Sr., was the guest speaker on the 225th anniversary Sunday on October 23, 1949. He used as his themes, "Brethren Principles In Modern Life" and "The Art of Being A Dunker." Pastors from neighboring congregations spoke briefly concerning their association with the Coventry Church and Levi K. Ziegler, the regional executive, delivered brief remarks.

Pastor Keiper wrote about the setting for this anniversary:

"The Urner oaks on the historic grounds surrounding the church were at their best---rich in autumn colors, standing as eloquent though mute witnesses of the religious activities of the generations past."<sup>19</sup>

The beautiful grove of trees in which the church is located were often objects of reference in the church *Minutes*. So important have these trees been in the life of the congregation that D. Howard Keiper penned lines in celebration of them and the events of prior years. "The

"The Trees Stand Tall at Coventry" and tell

"... of lovefeasts on moonlit eves,

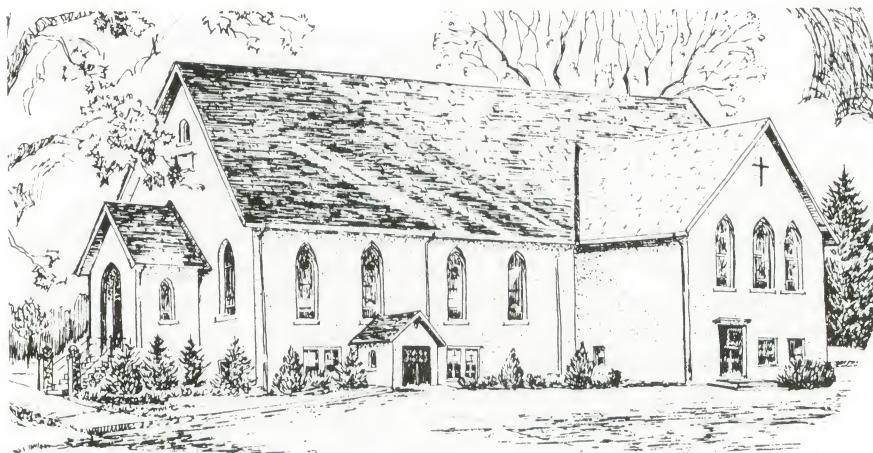
Of daylight councils and schools for song,

Of preaching services in the times when such were long."

The Coventry congregation lost an active member by death on July 7, 1950. Clifton P. Buckwalter (1880-1950), the son of John Buckwalter of Kenilworth, served the Coventry congregation as a deacon (1925-1950), a teacher of the Men's Bible Class, a member of the Finance Board and Building Committee. A graduate of Juniata College (1900), he was a clerk, cashier and president of a local bank (1930-1945). He served the district as a member of the Mission Board (1935-1950) and was a school director of the North Coventry School District for nine years. Bro. Buckwalter married Clara Harley.

In April, 1952, the pastor conducted a special service for members who united with the congregation between April, 1946, and April, 1952. Ninety-five members were received in this period, twenty-four by church letters and seventy-one by baptism. The church membership for the year 1952 was 364.

By November, 1953, a new education wing was completed and in use. Calvert N. Ellis and H. Stover Kulp were dedicatory speakers. The stewardship of many members of the church and Sunday School made possible this essential \$50,000 addition. On Easter Sunday, 1952, a special offering toward the building project amounted to \$6,000. Many people sacrificed of their substance and gave of their time to make the new building a reality.



*The Coventry Church of the Brethren*

In July and August, 1955, the Regional Youth Cabinet and the brotherhood Brethren Service Commission cooperated in a work camp at Pottstown. The Coventry Church provided living quarters for six young people who participated in the summer project. The work campers cleaned and repaired a building in a section of Pottstown where white, black and Indian families lived. These youth conducted Church School on Sundays for the unchurched and Vacation Bible School and playground activities during the week for children and youth of the community.

When the work campers returned to their own communities in the fall, the Coventry members continued the ministry under the name of "The Washington Street Mission." Five youth from the church worked in the community and members of the Coventry Sunday School continued a Christian Education program.

Reginald B. Burtt (1924- ), son of Oliver D. and Hannah Brownback Burtt of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, taught Sunday School at the mission. Mr. and Mrs. Ladson Saylor organized Wednesday evening classes for the neighborhood youth. Mr. and Mrs. David Rinehart, Mr. and Mrs. George M. Kreps, Warren M. Eschbach and John P. Kreps also assisted in the Pottstown mission work. This project was terminated when an industrial highway was constructed through the neighborhood.

The historic Coventry Church, on East Cedarville Road, has been the site for many significant events in the life of the district and the region. It was the location for the 250th anniversary lovefeast for young people on January 1, 1958. On October 25, 1958, the Men's Work Council of the North Atlantic District sponsored a district-wide lovefeast in the church with R. W. Schlosser as the speaker. Two weeks later, the Coventry Church observed its own 234th anniversary with A. G. Breidenstine as the guest speaker at the morning service and Velva Jane Dick as the guest at the evening program.

The eventful anniversary year of the Church of the Brethren (1958) was concluded with the Anniversary Call program. Forty missionaries from the Coventry congregation dedicated themselves to conduct an Every-member Visitation in the interest of church renewal and increased out-reach ministries. Appropriately, the year was climaxed with the twelfth annual candlelighting service conducted by Anna Ruth Keiper and the church choirs.

In 1974, the congregation enumerated twelve workers whom the membership was supporting in whole or in part in its foreign mission ministry. These people were Mr. and Mrs. Ladson Saylor, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Elliott, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Valencourt, Mr. and Mrs. Everett Fasnacht, Mr. and Mrs. John De Pue and Mr. and Mrs. David Rinehart. These people were serving in Costa Rica, Nigeria, Ecuador, India, Bolivia and Austria.

The Coventry Church has been notable in the number of young men and women who have dedicated themselves to mission and ministerial service. The congregation has called and advanced the following persons to the Christian ministry:

October 4, 1902. Jacob Grater advanced to the second degree of the ministry.

May 14, 1915. H. Stover Kulp called to the ministry.

April 6, 1923. Madilyn Boorse licensed to preach.

May, 1929. Marian Rinehart given a permanent license to preach.

May 15, 1935. Wayne Hollinger Dick licensed to the ministry.

Advanced to the eldership on July 5, 1942.

July 13, 1936. Jacob Trostle Dick licensed to the ministry.

Ordained to the ministry on May 14, 1939.

December 27, 1936. Ruth Kulp installed as a minister.

November 5, 1950. John David Keiper licensed to the ministry.

October 7, 1951. Ladson Saylor licensed to the ministry. He was ordained on August 5, 1956.

March 16, 1952. Paul R. Austin was licensed to preach. He was advanced to the eldership on February 17, 1963.

-----1953. George M. Kreps was licensed to the ministry and was ordained in 1955.

December 18, 1960. John P. Kreps, Jr., was licensed to preach.

September 10, 1972. Reginald Blane Burtt was licensed to the ministry.

D. Howard Keiper concluded fourteen years of ministry to the church in August, 1960. During his busy pastoral years at Coventry (1946-1960), he helped the congregation grow from 313 members to 460. With gentleness and patience, with fine administrative skills and wisdom, he won the devotion of young and old. A service of appreciation honored the Keiper family before they entered the Williamsburg pastorate in Middle Pennsylvania.

Wilbur A. Martin (1914- ), former pastor of the Pottstown Church, was on furlough from the African mission field in 1960. During the closing months of 1960 he provided an interim-ministry to the Coventry Church. On January 1, 1961, Wilbur and Evelyn Martin entered into full-time service with the congregation. The pastor and his family moved into a new parsonage in February and presided over an "Open House" in March as members visited. Francis Wampler, Sr., a layman of the church, assisted pastor Martin with visitation and program. He had been active in Brethren Volunteer work in Denver, Colorado, and in Houston, Texas.

Wednesday evening classes on "Lay Evangelism" and "The Life of Christ" were offered at the church. Ten members of the church entered the brotherhood's Fellowship of Growth program for self-improvement. When the Billy Graham Crusade was conducted in Philadelphia in the fall of 1961, many members of the congregation assisted with the organization and promotion of these services.

The Coventry Church has been a center for community and district gatherings. It was host to the Pottstown Council of Church Women's Fellowship for a dessert program (1961), during which meeting the plight of the migrant laborer was presented. On January 12, 1962, the church was the center for a district stewardship interpretation conference. Leland Wilson, Harl Russel, Kenneth Morse, Howard Royer and Revie Slaybaugh directed the conference for the brotherhood. When Ladson Saylor returned in 1962 from his mission work in Costa Rica, he shared his experiences with the church members.

Robert W. Neff (1936- ), who married Dorothy Marilyn Rosewarne of the Coventry Church (1959), assisted the pastor in 1962 with

youth ministries. He came to the church with experience as a youth minister of the First Congregational Church of Cheshire, Connecticut, where he was employed prior to his graduation from Yale University. In the summer of this same year, families of the Coventry congregation entertained eleven black children from Baltimore, Maryland, for a week.

The Coventry Church honored H. Stover Kulp with a special missionary conference in June, 1964. He retired from the Nigerian mission field in 1963. Members of the congregation learned at the conference that a bequest of \$10,000 from the Amanda Reifsnyder estate had been invested in Brethren Church Extension notes, the interest from which supports mission work.

Many former missionaries gathered to honor Bro. Kulp at the Coventry Church. Among those present were the Monroe Goods, the Charles Biebers, the Gerald Nehers, the Robert McKays, the Wilbur Martins, the J. C. Wines, Sara Shisler, Emma Ziegler, Velva Jane Dick, Ron Moyer and Mrs. John De Pue. Calvert N. Ellis was the convocation speaker.

Various church school departments prepared special exhibits from six different mission lands. Displays were prepared by Esther E. Kreps from the China field; Emma Ziegler from the India field; Mrs. John De Pue from the Bolivia field; Mrs. Ralph Saylor from the Costa Rica field; and George M. Kreps from the Ecuadorian field. The main sanctuary of the church exhibited a miniature replica of an African compound.<sup>20</sup> The church maintains a Sunday School room with more than 200 artifacts and pictures from the African, Indian, Chinese, Costa Rican, Bolivian and Ecuadorian mission fields.

H. Stover Kulp died on October 12, 1964. Memorial services were conducted for him at the church on October 15th. He was buried in the East Coventry Mennonite Cemetery near Kenilworth and a simple bronze marker over his grave indicates that he was the co-founder of the Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria, West Africa, where he served from 1922 until 1963.

In the month of July, 1970, a dozen youth from the congregation visited interesting sites and centers associated with the Church of the Brethren. They toured the Brethren Service Center at New Windsor, Maryland; the First Church of the Brethren in York, Pennsylvania; the Bethany Theological Seminary at Oak Brook, Illinois; and the denominational headquarters in Elgin, Illinois.

Wilbur A. Martin resigned his work at the Coventry Church on August 10, 1971 to accept the pastorate of the Orlando, Florida, Church of the Brethren. Robert H. Lloyd (1914- ), residing in the Coventry congregation, cared for the pastoral needs of the church until a successor could be found. Bro. Lloyd, the son of Edgar K. and Mary Stager Lloyd, united with the Church of the Brethren at Harmonyville (1924) and was licensed (1937) and ordained (1941) to the Christian ministry by this congregation. Bro. Lloyd has ministered as a pastor to churches in Kingsley, Iowa (1941-1945), Copper Hill, Virginia (1945-1948),

Boones Mill, Virginia (1948-1949), and at Buckeye, Kansas (1949-1955). In 1957, he was married to Dorothy Noble of the Parker Ford congregation.

During Bro. Lloyd's brief pastorate in Coventry, destructive Hurricane Agnes struck the community, wreaking havoc along the Schuylkill River. When the flood waters rose more than thirty feet, many agencies within the Pottstown community and nearby areas came to the aid of victims. Members of the Coventry Church of the Brethren joined with others in caring for families, providing food, replacing furniture and restoring buildings along the river's course (June-September, 1972).

Larry Graybill (1947- ), a graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary, inaugurated his pastoral ministry to the Coventry Church on August 1, 1972. Bro. Graybill is the son of Mahlon Heagy and Ann Carper Graybill of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He united with the East Fairview Church of the Brethren (1957) and was licensed (1970) and ordained (June 23, 1972) by his home congregation. In the summer of 1967, he worked for the Eastern District as a youth field worker. Larry Graybill was married to Sharon Patrick of the Hanoverdale Church of the Brethren on March 18, 1972.



*Larry and Sharon Graybill*

Bro. Graybill ministers to a congregation which has remained active and growing in membership. It maintains an exceptional interest in the mission program of the general brotherhood and is recognized as one of the dynamic churches of the Atlantic Northeast District. The church maintains an outreach ministry to its own community and to the world in a degree which has made it an exceptional leader among the congregations.

gations of the district. Marian Scholten conducts a Nursery School at the church for more than sixty Nursery-age children who attend the school from distances as great as twenty miles.

The Coventry Church is the oldest continuously active congregation of the brotherhood. It maintains within its active membership members of the original Urner family. These families include Maurice Atlee Rinehart, Wilbur A. Rinehart, John Howard Rinehart (deceased in 1954), Marian Rinehart Scholten and Isabelle Kulp Rosewarne.

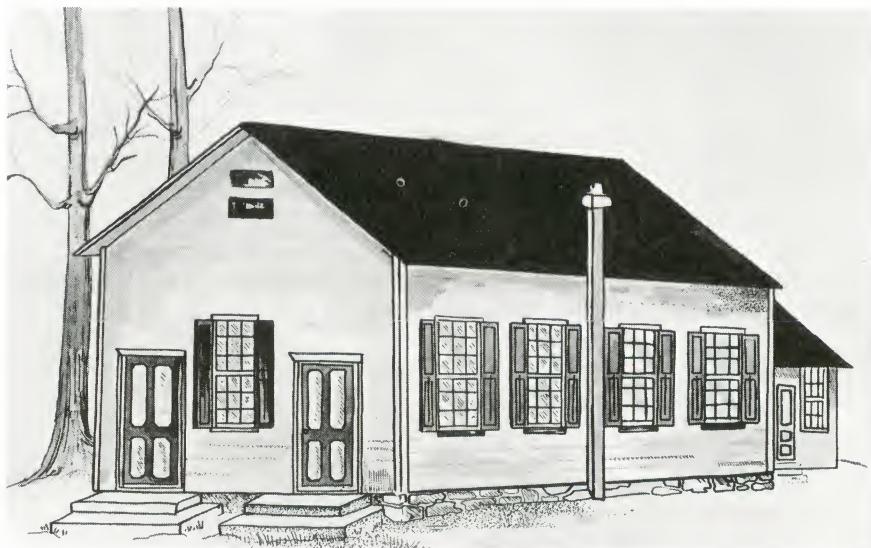
In November, 1974, the church celebrated its 250th anniversary. Dale W. Brown and Harold Z. Bomberger were anniversary speakers as the church celebrated its ties with the past. An Anniversary Committee, consisting of Mary Jane Kulp, Esther C. Clark, Esther E. Kreps, Dorothy Saylor Pentz and John A. Kreps, Sr., produced a volume entitled, *History of the Coventry Church of the Brethren, 1724-1974*.

Elders and moderators of the Coventry congregation in the twentieth century have included the following:

1897-1912. J. P. Hetric  
1912-1914. Milton C. Swigart  
1914-1920. Lloyd R. Holsinger  
1921. W. G. Nyce  
1922-1926. Aubrey R. Coffman  
1927-1928. A. M. Stout  
1929-1946. Trostle P. Dick  
1946. District Ministerial Board  
1947. B. F. Waltz  
1948-1960. D. Howard Keiper  
1961-1964. Wilbur A. Martin  
1965. Ralph R. Frey  
1966-1970. Robert W. Barr  
1971-1974. Waldo E. Dick  
1975- Francis Wampler, Jr.

## CHAPTER TEN

## THE AMWELL CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



*Sketch of the Amwell Church*

The Amwell Church of the Brethren is situated in farming land along the Sand Brook road in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. "Dunkard Road" and Lambert Road intersect with the Sand Brook road close to the present church property. The rebuilt white frame building is constructed on land originally given in 1811 by Israel Poulson, Sr., for the first meetinghouse of the Brethren in New Jersey. The original deed for the Amwell Church certifies that it must be returned to the original heirs or their descendants if the church ever ceases to exist.

The first settlers in the Amwell Township region of Hunterdon County were pioneer farmers. In 1733, five Brethren and their families crossed the Delaware River from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and established themselves as yeomen. John Naas, Anthony Deerdorf, Jacob More, Rudolph Harley and John Peter Lausche constituted the beginnings of the New Jersey congregation.<sup>1</sup> Jacob More sold some of his Hunterdon County land, near present-day Headquarters, New Jersey, to John Naas.

The abstract of the deed states,

"This indenture made the 5th day of May, 1734, between Jacob Moor, of Amwell, Hunterdon, yeoman, and John Naas of the same

town, county and province, gent., for 25 acres of land, for 24 pounds of good lawful money.

Jacob Moor.

Witnesses:

Anthony Deardorff

his

Benjamin X Seaverns

mark

Samuel Geeen."

Naas' home was on the Neshanic Creek. Here he farmed, made some pottery and prepared the poems and sermons he delivered to the Brethren as they met in private homes for worship services. Abraham H. Cassel described him as a "German Whitefield." Others have referred to him as "beloved" and "incomparable teacher." He and Rudolph Harley were co-workers in creating the Amwell congregation. Naas, who served as the elder-in-charge of the church at Marienborn, Germany, also ministered as elder to the growing New Jersey settlement.(1733-1741). His death came on May 12, 1741. He is buried in an unmarked grave in the Moore family burial grounds about two miles east of the Amwell Church.

Another organizer of the Amwell congregation was John Peter Lausche. He died in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, his will being proved at Trenton on April 30, 1751. His will mentioned his wife Christiana, a minor son named John, a brother named Christian and a brother-in-law named Peter Wirth.

For seventy-eight years (1733-1811) the Brethren of New Jersey conducted their house fellowships from home to home. Lovefeasts were conducted in homes when "a brother found himself disposed to give the feast of charity."<sup>2</sup> John Bechtelsheimer, an immigrant from Holland, succeeded John Naas as minister and was assisted by Gideon Rouser. William Housel (b. 1728), from Neuweid near Coblenz, Germany, was called to the ministry at the Amwell Church about 1750. Abraham Laushe, Sr., who was born near Krefeld, Germany, in 1732, married Margaret, the daughter of John Bechtelsheimer. Bro. Laushe was called to the ministry at Amwell and shared a German-language ministry to the congregation for many years. George Kline (1715-1783), who settled in Hunterdon County in 1738, was baptized at the Amwell Church by John Naas. He ministered as an assistant to the congregation until he moved to Tulpehocken in Berks County, Pennsylvania, about 1750.<sup>3</sup>

Israel Poulson, Sr. ( -1856) was helpful in establishing a permanent site for the Amwell Church. He gave one-half acre of land on which the original Amwell meetinghouse was erected. There are some who claim that a church house existed in New Jersey as early as 1770, but no positive proof of this exists. The original meetinghouse was built in 1811. The building was low and rectangular in shape and was entered by any one of three doors on one side of the building. The interior was divided into sections.

Gideon Moore gave half an acre of land for a cemetery close to the present Amwell Church site in 1838. The original burial ground for the Brethren was a plot known as "the old Jacob Moore Burial Ground." A number of deteriorating markers show that William Acker ( -1793), Gideon Moore, Daniel Moore ( -1807), Jacob Moore ( -1817) and Abraham Moore ( -1818) are buried here with their wives and children. In the 1830s, when the surrounding farm land was cut up by horses and carriages in attendance at funerals, Bro. Moore gave land more accessible to the church for burials. The congregation took possession of the land on April 13, 1839. The first burial in the new cemetery was for Hannah Poulson, the wife of Elder Israel Poulson (September 21, 1839). On October 17, 1839, the congregation agreed that Bro. Poulson should build a stone wall around the cemetery. On October 23, 1920, this land came under the control of the Lower Amwell Cemetery Association.

Edmund Dalrymple ( -1847) became the elder of the congregation on October 10, 1835. While Bro. Poulson maintained general oversight of the congregation, Bro. Dalrymple's function was to "administer church ordinances, baptisms, marriage ceremonies, etc."<sup>4</sup> He assisted Israel Poulson, Sr., in the ministry. Both men proved able administrators in handling tensions which were developing in the growing congregation. Abraham Laushe, the church clerk, maintained accurate records of the proceedings of the councils. The Amwell Church maintains in its possession record books extending to April 11, 1835, written by Bro. Laushe and his successors in office. Some of these recordings are interesting for their brevity. One states, "The church assembled again on the eleventh of April, 1840. Nothing of importance transacted and the meeting adjourned. Henry Laushe, Clerk."

Israel Poulson was charitable toward women in the ministry. Sarah Righter Major, daughter of John Righter of the Philadelphia First Church, began her public ministry in Philadelphia. Israel Poulson showed her the rarest courtesy by inviting her to share the pulpit at Amwell. The Amwell Church was the first place she preached outside the city of Philadelphia.

A question of seniority and succession to leadership led to the division of the Amwell Church. When Edmund Dalrymple died on August 31, 1847, Israel Poulson, Jr., was chosen to succeed him (April 8, 1848). John P. Moore, a resident deacon, had been advanced to the ministry on April 13, 1844. When Israel Poulson, Jr., a younger man, was chosen to a position of preeminence over Bro. Moore, the congregation divided between the two leaders.

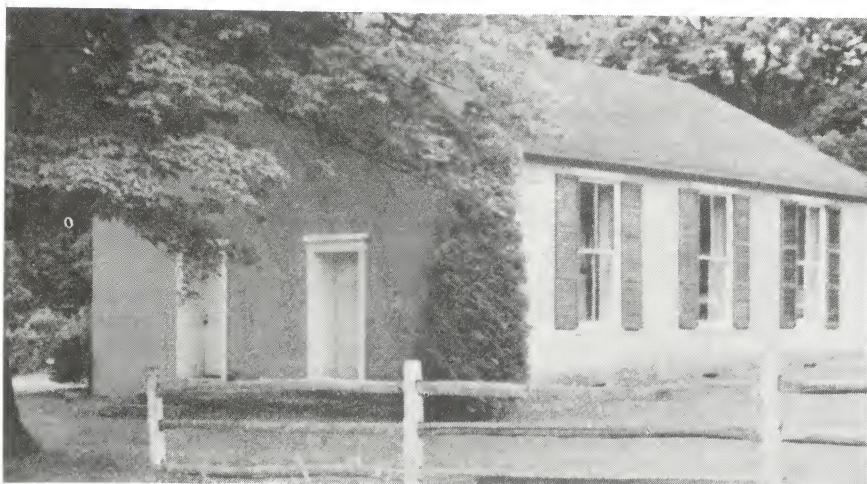
Israel Poulson, Sr., was a ready speaker and a commanding personality. A rather stout man of medium height and swarthy complexion, his ministry was acceptable to most members.<sup>5</sup> As he aged and looked for assistance, he unwittingly laid the basis for contention within the congregation by advancing his own son to leadership.

Israel Poulson, Sr., not only ministered to the Amwell Church membership but also to a mission he promoted about five miles northeast of

Flemington, New Jersey. Here he conducted meetings in homes until a small frame structure was erected in 1849. In 1878, a new church house was erected and was called "Bethel." James Quinter preached the dedicatory sermon for this meetinghouse and Jesse P. Hetric conducted the devotions.

The work at Amwell prospered in spite of the division. The original meetinghouse, grown to be forty-five years of age, was replaced with a new structure on the same site. This new building, constructed in 1856, was valued at \$1,600.

In 1848, the supporters of John P. Moore withdrew from the Amwell Church to form a new congregation. The new group was facetiously called "Mooreites" and the group at Amwell was designated "Israelites." The Mooreites met for a time in private homes until they were able to construct a small church at Sand Brook, about a mile north of the Amwell Church. Here, on half an acre of ground purchased by Hiram Moore, the separating members organized themselves into the Sand Brook German Baptist Church. Twenty-four persons followed the leadership of Bro., Moore.



*The Sand Brook Meetinghouse*

John P. Moore (1811-1889) was one of a family of nine children. He was reared on a farm and apprenticed by his parents, Gideon and Catherine Yorks Moore, to the blacksmith trade. He united with the Amwell German Baptist Church (1838) and was called to the ministry by this congregation (1844). Bro. Moore was married to Anna Pierson (1809-1892) of Harbourton, New Jersey. He ministered to the Sand Brook congregation from the time of its organization until his death on October 26, 1889.

One of the early items of business conducted by the new congregation is stated in this council meeting *Minute*:

"Be it remembered that on the 12th day of May one thousand eight hundred and forty nine at a council meeting held at the home of Silas Shearman for the purpose of arranging the business of the church, it was agreed that we should observe the salutation of the kiss at the time of holding our communion and lovefeast."

In the forty-eight years of its existence (1848-1896) as a separate congregation, the Sand Brook Church was served by three ministers. John P. Moore was assisted for a time by Henry F. Trout (1829-1872), who was called to the ministry on November 17, 1855. On the death of Bro. Trout, Charles W. Moore (1838-1903), who had been elected to the office deacon in 1864, succeeded to the ministry of the congregation (1881). The Sand Brook Church merged with the Bethel congregation on September 19, 1896 under the name of the "Union Church" and was served briefly by William M. Howe.

James Quinter, editor of *The Gospel Visitor*, made an eastern tour of the United States in 1856 to visit many of the Brethren. He commented about his experience in New Jersey:

"The brethren here have a large congregation and they have recently built a new and commodious house for worship. Although this church has passed through trials within the last few years, it has prospered. Brethren Poulson and Wagoner are the ministers."<sup>6</sup>

The Sand Brook Church is maintained much as it existed when the services where concluded in the 1920s. A two-door cement-stucco building, with a central heating stove, suspended chandeliers of coal oil lamps and long preaching desk, is preserved by the Sand Brook Historical Committee. In the cemetery, which dates from about 1850, lie the remains of many former members of the Amwell Church. Such family names as Moore, Horne, Dalrymple, Trout, Davis, Wagner, Fauss and Cowdrick are imprinted on the memorials.

Other early leaders of the Amwell Church have been Robeson Hyde ( -1901), who ministered during the Civil War and the postwar period, chiefly at Bethel; John D. Hoppock (1819-1906); and J. W. Smouse, who served from 1882 to 1884. An interesting Amwell Church *Minute* states: "Agree to pay J. W. Smouse the sum of \$300 for one year, the money to be paid monthly in advance."<sup>7</sup> A later *Minute* states the agreement between the church and pastor:

"Moved and seconded that if the church at any time feels that they no longer wish Bro. Smouse to labor for them they must give him three months notice of such fact. Also, if Bro. Smouse wishes at any time to resign his labors with this church he must give the same notice. Passed unanimous."<sup>8</sup>

Amos H. Haines (1859-1924), who became a teacher at Juniata College, grew up within a mile of the Amwell Church and preached here for several years (1884-1886). He was baptized at the Amwell congregation in January, 1876. It was about this time the church council decided to levy a tax on each member in order to meet expenses: "Moved and seconded that the members are required to pay their tax within thirty days after the bills are presented."<sup>9</sup> In 1885, the tax on each member

was doubled over the amount of the previous year.<sup>10</sup> In 1889, the annual tax was \$3.00 per member.

The 1880s were a stormy period in the life of the Amwell congregation. Difficulties centered about the manner in which Elder Israel Poulson, Jr., handled an estate. Tensions grew until Bro. Poulson resigned as elder in 1885. Those who supported him began to absent themselves from public worship. Elders Christian Bucher and Samuel Harley visited the church as district representatives to seek a reconciliation. The results are recorded in the *Church Minutes*:

“A motion to have Israel Poulson come back to the Amwell Church and preach occasionally was lost. After nearly a whole day had been spent in counseling with the church, the visiting elders announced that it seemed impossible to accomplish anything. There being no rule on the *Minutes* that would apply to the case; therefore, the matter was dropped with a recommendation from the elders that the Brethren try to effect a reconciliation among themselves.”<sup>11</sup>

The congregation voted each year on whether it would observe the lovefeast and communion service. The *Minute* for March 8, 1884, states: “Moved and seconded that we have a Communion this spring.” During this period, one of the points of disagreement among the churches of the brotherhood was over the method of observing the feet-washing service. The Annual Meeting held tenaciously to the double mode as opposed to the single mode. Martin Urner, at Coventry, introduced the double mode of feet-washing in which one individual ministers to several persons. The Germantown congregation steadfastly maintained an observance of the single mode in which the person who washes an individual’s feet also dries them. In 1886, the Amwell congregation decided unanimously to observe the single mode of feet-washing.<sup>12</sup>

The Sand Brook congregation and the Bethel Church were merged into the Union Church on September 19, 1896. This new fellowship called William Mohler Howe (1867-1917) to minister to the two preaching points. Ministers succeeding Bro. Howe at the Union Church were Hiram Forney, Seth Myers, Henry T. Horne, Jacob F. Graybill and Monroe B. Miller.

The church council in 1890 read a letter from D. L. Miller requesting a census of the church and its property. The Amwell meetinghouse reported a seating capacity of four hundred in a building and lot valued at \$3,000.<sup>13</sup> The United States Census for the same year reported three meetinghouses of the Brethren in New Jersey with an aggregate membership of 191 and a property valuation of \$5,000.

Frank F. Holsopple (1866-1946), from Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, was called to minister to the congregation. A recent graduate of Juniata College, he began his ministry to the Amwell Church on September 1, 1892. He served the church until 1895, seeking to effect a reconciliation between the Amwell, Bethel and Sand Brook members. Bro. Holsopple was a student and a teacher. His access to Bro. James Quinter’s ample library encouraged his devotion to learning.

During Bro. Holsopple's pastorate, a church parsonage was constructed in Sergeantsville. A congregational committee investigated various properties and concluded that it would be in the best interests of the congregation to build its own house. The investigating committee became the construction committee and a new home was erected. The committee consisted of J. R. Lawshe, Lewis H. Lawshe, Joseph Haines, Isaac Haines, George Altvater, H. L. Van Dolak, C. B. Wilson, L. M. Hyde and Sister Anna L. Diltz.<sup>14</sup>

William M. Howe succeeded Bro. Holsopple in the Amwell pastorate (1895-1896). "Bro. Howe's certificate was. . .presented to the meeting and he was received by the right hand of fellowship."<sup>15</sup> He ministered to the congregation for a year and then assumed the work of the Union Church.

A writer named James Buchanan described the Brethren of New Jersey in the nineteenth century:

"The writer remembers well the long beards, straight collars, 'shadbelly' coats and wide-brimmed hats of the men and the neat, clean, coal-scuttle bonnets, white kerchiefs and dainty slate-colored dresses of the women. But, in New Jersey at least, this distinctiveness in dress began to fade away before the completion of the first half of the present century."<sup>16</sup>

John Cassel Reiff was called to minister to the church beginning on December 19, 1896. A member of the faculty at Juniata College (1892-1896) and a former member of the Green Tree congregation, Bro. Reiff preached to the membership until March 20, 1899. During this period, the Progressive Brethren Church (Ashland group) laid claim to a share in the Amwell parsonage. The Amwell Church council rejected the claim "because of its utter illegality."<sup>17</sup> In 1899, the Progressive Brethren Church erected a church building adjacent to the Amwell Church parsonage in Sergeantsville and became an independent organization.

For a period of months, Tobias Myers (1826-1914) ministered to the Brethren in New Jersey. A member of the Philadelphia First Church since 1898, he preached in New Jersey from 1900 until 1902. Bro. Myers was a native of Western Pennsylvania where his grandfather, Michael Myers, was the first brother to be ordained to the eldership west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Hiram Forney came from Goshen, Indiana, in the fall of 1902 to take up the pastoral responsibilities. A certificate of transfer was granted to him by the Rock Run congregation of Elkhart County, Indiana. Bro. Forney served the churches of New Jersey until 1905.

Sunday Schools were not customarily held all year round at the beginning in the Amwell Church. Elder R. Hyde organized the first Sunday School in Hunterdon County in May, 1873. Each year a decision had to be made concerning the time the Sunday School would begin, usually on the first Sunday in April. In 1904, Hiram Forney was elected Sunday School superintendent and H. T. Horne was his assistant.<sup>18</sup> When Sunday Schools were conducted on a year round basis, they were

frequently known as "evergreen schools."

Seth Myers became the minister at the Amwell churches in the spring of 1905 and he served the churches until 1907. During his pastorate, Henry T. Horne was called to the ministry (1906). He was a member of the Sand Brook congregation but was called to the ministry by both the Amwell and Sand Brook groups. In the absence of a pastor, Bro. Horne ministered to the congregation from March, 1907, until July, 1907. The Sunday School at Amwell had thirty students and an average of ten visitors, making a total school of forty persons besides teachers and officers.<sup>19</sup>

Jacob F. Graybill (1874-1949) was sent by the Eastern District Mission Board to work with the Amwell churches. He ministered from July 1, 1907 until August, 1909. Monroe B. Miller (1864-1952) moved into New Jersey from Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, as a volunteer minister to work with Henry T. Horne (1909-1913).

During this period, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania was divided into two districts. A joint council of the Amwell and the Sand Brook churches was conducted on November 7, 1911, with the new District Mission Board of the North Atlantic District in charge. There were general remarks at the meeting concerning the need for a pastor who could devote his full time to the Christian work in New Jersey. The only decision made at this time was for the churches "to do the best they can under the circumstances."

On May 25, 1912, a special meeting of the Amwell and Sand Brook memberships resulted in a nearly unanimous decision to unite, forming one congregation to be known as the Amwell Church of the Brethren. Elder H. T. Horne was elected resident elder-in-charge of the work with J. Kurtz Miller, of the District Mission Board, maintaining general oversight of the work. At the time of the reunion the congregation had a total membership of eighty members in three meetinghouses.

The Mission Board proposed on March 29, 1913, that Monroe B. Miller should assume the role of pastor. The congregation agreed and Bro. Miller began his ministry on April 1, 1913. He served the church until poor health forced his resignation in the fall of 1915.

The Sisters' Aid Society was organized on January 1, 1912, and immediately became an active arm of the church. In the course of its first year, the new organization paid for the pavement in front of the church parsonage, produced aprons, pin-cushions, clothes-pin bags, pieced quilt blocks and men's shirts.

Late in 1916, a correspondent to *The Gospel Messenger* said, "We are still without a pastor." Early in 1917, Harry W. Rohrer, of Philadelphia, began to minister to the congregation. He ministered for a year and a half, concluding his work in June, 1918. In May, 1918, William J. Poulsom and Mrs. Urama J. Dilts presented new pulpit furniture to the church in honor of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Israel Poulsom, Jr. Memorial chairs were also given by Frank J. Epple in memory of Jacob Wagoner (1772-1855) and his wife, Elizabeth Fauss (1768-1848). Attorney A. O. Robbins, of Flemington, New Jersey, made the formal pre-

sentation of the pulpit and pulpit furniture in memory of his parents, Asa and Hannah Robbins.

Henry T. Horne was formally installed as pastor of the Amwell Church on July 7, 1918. The service was conducted by H. W. Rohrer, the retiring pastor. Henry T. Horne was born in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, on February 15, 1866. He was baptized into the membership of the Church of the Brethren at Amwell in 1888. Bro. Horne was married to Mary Alice Heckler of Hatfield, Pennsylvania. During the years he ministered as pastor to the Amwell membership he established a reputation as a gentle and gracious person and frequently was greeted with the title of "Dominie."

"It was his habit, a rare and heart-warming one, to work in the fields and vegetable gardens of his membership, if sickness occurred and the members could not do their own work. His prayers and presence helped in many anxious bedrooms.

"When the old cemetery, where John Naas is believed to be buried, needed weeding and cleaning out, he not only saw it was done but did as much if not more of the work than anyone."<sup>20</sup>

In 1921, the congregation printed a leaflet entitled, "The Amwell Church Bulletin." An issue dated April, 1921, gave a "Brief History of The Amwell Church." This same issue observed that "Israel Poulsom, Jr., was the father of ex-sheriff Poulsom of Hunterdon County. . .and Sister Urama Dilts of Flemington."

The congregation remained small in membership over the next several decades. During Bro. Horne's pastorate (1918-1945), the membership stabilized at about sixty persons. Muddy roads in the winter and springtime frequently reduced attendances at the several preaching points. A representative of the District Mission Board visited the congregation in 1927 and reported his findings to the district meeting:

"The attendance at each (of the three houses of worship) was small owing to the fact that the community surrounding at least two of the churches is made up largely of foreigners and not many children with whom we can work. We have recommended to the pastor the discontinuance of services at the Sand Brook house because of the small attendance and also because it is only a mile away from the Amwell house."<sup>21</sup>

Reports which came to the district and the brotherhood consistently emphasized small attendances. A report for 1929, for example, said that thirty people attended the spring lovefeast and communion service and that fifty-two persons attended the fall services. The Bethel Church at its fall lovefeast in the same year had eighteen communicants. A report of 1930 stated, "The average attendance at the Sunday School for the past six months was thirty-four."<sup>22</sup>

Repairs were made to the Amwell Church in 1928 in preparation for the two hundredth anniversary of the congregation. The bicentennial services were conducted between September 12 and 17, 1933. Included among the guest speakers were M. C. Swigart, Trostle P. Dick, H. S. Replogle, Esther N. Swigart, H. K. Garman and Samuel H. Ziegler.

Local newspapers publicized the bicentennial and recalled:

“It is the oldest place of worship in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. During the Revolution, George Washington marched his army past the site of the present church and halted overnight at the village of Headquarters a mile distant.”<sup>23</sup>

*The Hunterdon County Democrat* contained this notice about the Amwell Church:

“In the wild and woolly days of 1733, when panthers and wildcats roamed the woodlands between Flemington and the Delaware River, when the King of England ruled over the residents of this county, then the most populous in the state, with Leni Lenape Indians still calling upon their white neighbors, the Amwell Church was founded.

“Many pastors have served this congregation through the two hundred years that have passed and, while the earlier ones were farmer-preachers, undoubtedly none have been more versatile than the present incumbent, Rev. Henry T. Horne, who is familiar with farming and many lines of work. When a member of his or any other congregation---or no congregation---is ill and needs first aid, Elder Horne has always been ready to sit up all night with a sick man, or help with a sick animal, milk the cows or feed the stock until help could be secured from outside the home. It is this neighborly duty, coupled with his keen knowledge of the needs of the community, that has kept a steady attendance at his church all through the past years when so many have had almost empty pews. The record for young folks’ attendance is also very high, and many of them exhibit with pride their badges of merit which show attendances of five, ten or more years at the Amwell Sunday School.”<sup>24</sup>

Important to the life of the congregation have been the annual homecoming events held in the fall. In 1931, W. G. Nyce, M. C. Swigart, B. B. Ludwick and E. M. Warford, of Stockton, New Jersey, were guest speakers. In 1939, Samuel H. Ziegler and Norman Paullin, of Camden, New Jersey, were guests for the home-coming. These events have been marked by excellent sermons, fine singing and social fellowship about the noon tables.

The church trustees decided in a ballot vote to close the Bethel Church as of November 24, 1939. The building and its contents were sold at public sale.

Henry T. Horne submitted his resignation to the Amwell Church, effective April 1, 1945, for the reason of failing health. The church gratefully accepted the resignation and prepared the following resolution:

“Sergeantsville, New Jersey  
March 22, 1945

“In consideration of the fact that our pastor, Elder Henry T. Horne, after a pastorate of almost twenty-seven years, has resigned on account of ill health,

“Be it resolved that we the members of the Amwell Church of the Brethren do in these resolutions express our appreciation for his

faithful service rendered which extended over so long a period of time, through sunshine and rain, cold and heat, always ready to serve;

"Be it also resolved that the secretary shall record these resolutions in the *Minutes* and that a copy of the same be sent to our retiring pastor, Elder Henry T. Horne.

The Amwell Congregation."

Bro. Horne died on June 27, 1945. During his ministry to the congregation, he received sixty-eight persons by baptism and by letter, performed 156 marriage services and officiated at nearly 300 funeral services. He was buried in the Lower Amwell Cemetery.

The church extended a call to George W. Landis, a frequent homecoming speaker, to accept the pastorate. When Bro. Landis felt he could not accept the call at the time, the church turned to three young men who were then serving in Civilian Public Service work in New Jersey. James Schrock, Lloyd Miller and Curtis W. Dubble shared the preaching assignments. Lloyd Miller was a Mennonite from Michigan; James Schrock was a member of the Church of the Brethren from the state of Indiana; and Curtis W. Dubble was a Brethren youth from Pennsylvania. These men were assigned to a dairy herd testing project in Somerset County, New Jersey, about thirty miles from the church. They shared the ministry at Amwell until September, 1945.

When Curtis W. Dubble (1922- ) was licensed to the ministry by the Heidelberg Church of the Brethren at Reistville, Pennsylvania, on September 21, 1945, the Amwell congregation called him to assume a minimal part-time pastoral work at the church. On November 13, 1945, Bro. Dubble was installed as the part-time pastor. The church paid him \$5.00 per Sunday for his work and the District Mission Board gave a \$2.50 supplement per Sunday. Within a short period of time, the church increased its share of salary to \$10.00 per week.

Early in March, 1946, Bro. Dubble announced that he decided to attend Elizabethtown College in the fall. During the ten months he served the church, the congregation began to practice annual program planning.

The Amwell Church called George W. Landis on three separate occasions to assume the pastorate. Finally, in May, 1946, Bro. Landis announced that he decided to give full time to the pastoral ministry. The congregation elected him to the pastorate on June 20, 1946. Bro. Landis and his family moved into the parsonage on October 10, 1946. Ninety members and friends of the church greeted the new pastor at a social in the Sunday School rooms on November 8th. He was formally installed as pastor in a service on December 7, 1946.

George W. Landis (1904- ) is the son of John H. and Lydia Hangey Landis of Souderton, Pennsylvania. He devoted much of his time to the ministry of music before he was called to the pastoral ministry. In 1933, the Springfield congregation licensed and ordained him to

the ministry in the same year. He married Frances Hedrick of Souderton, Pennsylvania.



*George W. Landis*

Bro. Landis has continued the tradition of home-coming services at the Amwell Church. On September 14, 1947, both he and Norman W. Paullin, of Asbury Park, New Jersey, were speakers. The Landis family quartet and the church choir presented special music for the occasion. At another home-coming service on September 12, 1948, new church hymnals were dedicated in memory of Henry T. Horne. C. C. Ellis, of Juniata College, was the guest speaker. In 1949, a church choir of twenty-six voices broadcast a series of half hour services over a local radio station.

The Amwell Church was severely damaged by fire on November 16, 1950. "It was a sad day for all of us as we viewed the remains of our beloved church on the eve of November 16th", said the church clerk. A spark from some burning brush lodged in part of the roof and smouldered for some hours before it set the building afire. Local fire companies responded and worked efficiently in removing most of the contents of the church.

The membership decided to congregate in the Sergeantsville community hall for services until the building could be restored. Forrest U. Groff, the brotherhood architect, met with the Amwell



*The Amwell Church*

Church officials to consider the design of the structure in the rebuilding process. Many church groups of the North Atlantic District and local individuals subscribed funds toward the restoration of the historic church house. The rebuilding was completed late in 1951 and a service of dedication for the structure was observed on November 25th. A. C. Baugher was the guest speaker for the morning and afternoon services.

Members of the Amwell Church honored the Holsopple brothers on the occasion of their eightieth birthday anniversary. On September 7, 1951, Ira C. Holsopple and his twin brother, Harry O. Holsopple, were greeted in a special recognition service by the congregation. Ira was called to the ministry at the Amwell meetinghouse and served as its pastor for a time. His brother Harry was a deacon and farmer at Penn Run, Pennsylvania. Ira C. Holsopple died on January 9, 1963.

At the suggestion of A. C. Baugher, fifteen men from the Amwell Church and the district met to clear the land at the Old Moore Family Cemetery where John Naas is buried. On Memorial Day, 1952, the men cleared the underbrush in order to discover the location of Naas' unmarked grave. They cut the bushes and lifted the fallen tombstones on the property which is owned by the Maresca family. In 1953, youth from the Eastern and the North Atlantic Districts visited the Amewll Church on a historical hike. They also visited the grave of Elder John Naas. As a result of this visit, for a period of time in the 1950s, youth made visits to the grave to remove undergrowth.

The Church of the Brethren was confronted with a changing world in the 1950s. One of the pressing questions centered on the basis for receiving members into church fellowship. As congregations found their communities changing, they were challenged to relate to people of non-Brethren backgrounds. Some congregations chose to receive members of evangelical backgrounds by a transfer of church letter; others required rebaptism by trine immersion; and others, like the Amwell congregation, voted to receive associate members (1953). Associate members

were granted all the rights of church membership except a voice in determining church polity and representation at annual or district conferences.

In the years from 1946 to 1954, the Amwell Church doubled its membership. It grew from a stated membership of sixty-eight to one hundred thirty-six. This growth enabled the congregation to become self-supporting. In 1954, the Amwell Church passed the following resolution to the district conference:

"We, the Amwell Church of the Brethren, in council assembled on October 12th, do with deep gratitude and thankful hearts express our desire to relieve the district of Southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Northern Delaware from further financial support graciously given during the years of stress, that other projects may enjoy such help as the district may be able to supply."

Ira C. Holsopple."<sup>25</sup>

The Amwell congregation has attracted the interest of Brethren from many sections of the nation because it is the third oldest congregation of the brotherhood in America. The Historical Committee of the brotherhood placed a bronze plaque in the pulpit area of the church to commemorate the memory of John Naas. On June 13, 1954, M. R. Zigler was the guest speaker for the unveiling of the plaque. Diane Landis, daughter of the pastor, unveiled a plaque which reads:

\*

IN MEMORY OF

\*

BISHOP JOHN NAAS

1670-1741

LOYAL SERVANT OF PRINCE IMMANUEL

BRETHREN PIONEER OF THE OLD WORLD

AND THE NEW

FOUNDER AND MINISTER OF THE

AMWELL CONGREGATION

1733-1741

"And others were tortured. . . of whom

the world was not worthy." Heb. 11.

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Bert B. Garman, chairman of the trustee board of the congregation, accepted the plaque for the church and said, "We ask an interest in your prayers that we here may continue in the faith set forth by John Naas."

On July 31, 1955, the congregation dedicated an enlarged Church School addition. This new construction cost the church \$4,870.00. Pastor George W. Landis and Abram A. Price, of the Indian Creek Church, spoke on the dedication Sunday. New pews were installed in the church sanctuary on December 10th of the same year by the local pew committee.

A congregation, which was inaugurated several centuries ago with a strong interest in missions, has continued this enthusiasm. The offerings of the first Sunday of each month have been dedicated to mission work. The congregation has supported the Brethren Service program, work in Ecuador and Castaner, and missionaries in India and Africa. Emma Ziegler, a retired missionary of India, has been the guest speaker on the occasion of the Mothers' and Daughters' banquet. Ira Moomaw, a former agricultural missionary to India, has been invited to the congregation on several occasions. In its local outreach ministry, the members conduct services at the Flemington jail and in community nursing homes.

A service of recognition and testimonial was given to Pastor and Mrs. George W. Landis for their service to the congregation and the community (October 1, 1966). A silver serving tray, containing the dates, "October 1, 1946 to October 1, 1966", was presented to the Landises. Under Bro. Landis' leadership the church has continued to be a community-conscious, self-supporting, servant church. Its membership is composed of working-class people with less than half a dozen still engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Frank E. Burd has served as the local church historian for many years. A former teacher and supervising principal of the South Bound Brook Schools, he has also served as the chairman of the Lower Amwell Cemetery Association since 1933.

The following persons have been called to the ministry by the Amwell Church:

August 23, 1882.--Charles W. Moore ordained to the ministry.

August 23, 1882.--John P. Moore advanced to the eldership.

December 28, 1882.--J. D. Koppock advanced to the eldership.

January, 1884.--Amos Hoppock Haines called to the ministry.

Advanced to the second degree in April, 1885.

August 19, 1895.--Ira Calvin Holsopple elected to the ministry. Called to the ministry on June 9, 1895 at Sand Brook.

1906.--Henry T. Horne was called to the ministry. Advanced to the eldership on November 5, 1911.

November 5, 1911. Monroe B. Miller advanced to the ordained ministry.

The following moderators have presided over the councils of the Amwell Church:

1910-1911--James B. Shisler

1911-1917--J. Kurtz Miller for the District Mission Board

1918-1945--Henry T. Horne

1945-1946--Ira C. Holsopple

March 18, 1947--George W. Landis

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## PHILADELPHIA FIRST CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



*Philadelphia First Church  
Broad and Dauphin Streets*

Like some other Protestant groups, the Church of the Brethren viewed the city as a threat to Christianity. For nearly three hundred years, Protestants in general considered the city as primarily evil and unsuited to the development of the Christian life. Many groups insisted on imposing rural and village ethics on city residents. When the Annual Meeting convened in the Germantown Church on June 11, 1791, the threat of the city was one of the problems discussed:

“How can we here in Germantown resist by joint effort the very injurious evil which by the conformation to the world is worked upon the minds of the young as we are living so near to the capital of the country? . . .”

In 1790, the city of Philadelphia was crowded into small sections along the Delaware River. Prior to 1854, when twenty-eight districts were consolidated into a metropolitan city, the original community was bounded by South and Vine Streets between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. The first decade of the nineteenth century was marked by a rapid expansion of the city into new industries, flourishing commerce and developing municipal affairs. By 1807, Philadelphia was the

largest city and port in the nation. The main streets were being paved for the first time when the Brethren established a congregation on Crown Street.

Members of the Germantown Church began to move to Philadelphia to take up active roles in its community life. The skills of German craftsmen were required to promote the developing industries of the city. Peter Keyser, Jr., not only ministered as a pastor to the Germantown and Philadelphia congregations, but he operated a tanning business in Germantown and a lumber business in Philadelphia. He was the secretary of the Board of Health, inspector and treasurer of the prison and a director and controller of the public schools when the educational system was inaugurated.<sup>1</sup>

People of German descent came into a section known as the Northern Liberties. This was land made available by Penn to settlers just beyond "the great towne." In 1771, this section became a borough. The area filled rapidly with German tradesmen and artisans during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Peter Keyser, Jr., and others associated with the Church of the Brethren, lived in this section of Philadelphia. The Brethren began to conduct their earliest meetings on the northern edge of the city. Their first place of public worship was in a small school house on the northwest corner of Fourth and Vine Streets. Peter Keyser, Jr., became the bishop of this new congregation while he also continued to minister to the Germantown Church (1813).

On March 1, 1817, the Philadelphia members drew up "Articles of Agreement" to form "The Church of Christ in Philadelphia, commonly called German Baptists." The members who signed the agreement were Peter Keyser, Jr., Jacob Zigler, James Lynd, Christian Lehman, John Heisler, Deborah Lehman, John Fox and Catharine Langstroth who marked her signature with an "X". James Lynd, George Gorgas, James Gorgas, Jacob Zigler and John Rink were appointed to purchase ground for a new building for worship. A plot, forty-five feet by eighty-six feet, was purchased on the east side of Crown Street below Callowhill and close to Fourth Street.

Within the next six months a new house of worship was constructed on the site. The Crown Street meetinghouse was dedicated on October 12, 1817. The good bishop of the congregation, Peter Keyser, Jr., spoke at the morning, the afternoon and the evening services.

For fifty-five years (1817-1872), members of the Philadelphia First Church worshipped in this brick building. They frequently shared services with the Germantown congregation and had no lovefeast service of their own until November 16, 1826. They had no burial ground but entered into an agreement to share the cemetery at the Germantown Church (1840). The cellar beneath the church building was rented to provide an income for the membership. These were years of struggle for "the subject of finances arose at nearly every trustee and council meeting and consumed much time with few constructive results."<sup>2</sup>

The church was forced to move again because of its unsatisfactory location. The church membership had become small and scattered. About the time the church relocated on Marshall Street, the membership was being visited by Annual Conference Committees concerning the precedence given to one minister over another and other practices of the church. Jesse P. Hetric, who was invited to become pastor, said of the invitation,

"I hesitated, but after consulting with my wife, with some misgivings, I accepted the call. The church was then in some trouble because of the work and the demands of conference committees. I recognized that such a condition and my inexperience in city pastoral work, made my success at least somewhat problematical. With much prayer and trust in God, in the spring of 1874 we moved to the city and located near the church at 1012 Marshall Street. This was the beginning of a pastorate of eight years."<sup>4</sup>

One of the problems for the church centered in the use of an indoor pool for baptisms. John Fox, who was progressive in vision and leadership, stated in a church council that "the time has come when we should have a pool" (October, 1874). For fifty-seven years, the church relied on Cooper's Creek, "Peter Leibert's Creek", the Wissahickon, the Schuylkill and the Delaware Rivers for baptisms, usually at a cost of seventy-five cents to a dollar and a half for "a place to dress." The Brethren acted swiftly, for within a short time the Church Minutes state, "Sunday evening, October 11, 1874, baptized by Jesse P. Hetric for the first time in the pool in the church, Charles Kline, Charles Hartmann and Henry Hartmann."

Philadelphia First Church was receiving members who were baptized in church pools before the Annual Conference regarded such baptisms as acceptable. The Annual Conference recognized pool baptisms as valid in 1877, insisting nevertheless that baptism in running water was desirable. At the request of the Washington City Church of the Brethren, the Annual Conference granted the privilege of placing pools in church houses (1902).

These were eventful years in the life of the growing city. The population was extending northward and westward. Twice in this period, the citizens faced a cholera epidemic and many hundreds died from the scourge. Religious and racial riots tore the heart of the city as the abolitionist movement increased in intensity. New factories, new churches and new homes appeared. The central city assumed the appearance of a metropolis and the main streets became crowded with shops and businesses. The wealthier population began to move to the outer edges, leaving poorer inhabitants to occupy the mid-city dwellings.

On October 12, 1872, the Crown Street meetinghouse was sold. The membership of the congregation was becoming scattered and the neighborhood of the church was surrounded by "lager beer saloons and other annoyances."<sup>5</sup> From 1872 to 1873, the First Church membership met in a hall at the corner of Sixth Street and Girard Avenue during the construction of a new and larger church building. The new brick

structure at 980 Marshall Street below Girard Avenue was ready for use in September, 1873. The congregation worshipped here until 1890.

The property on Marshall Street was sold and the last services were conducted in the building on April 13, 1890, by Jacob T. Myers. From 1890 to 1891, the congregation worshipped in Columbia Hall at 2215 Columbia Avenue, pending the construction of their new church building.

Fifteen ministers led the congregation during the period it was located on Crown Street (1813-1872). Succeeding Bishop Peter Keyser, Jr. (1766-1849), were James Lynd, Sr. (1774-1851), John Heisler, Timothy Banger (1773-1847), John Righter (1784-1860), Thomas Major (1812-1888), Sarah Righter Major (1808-1884), John Fox (1786-1880), David Harley ( -1880), Henry Geiger (1826-1885), John N. Wenger, Christian Custer ( -1879), Amos Cowell (1805-1865), Jacob Spanogle (1814-1876) and Emmanuel Heyser.

The following ministers preached at the Marshall Street location: Jesse P. Hetric (1843-1927), who ministered from April 6, 1874, until December 1, 1882; Joel K. Reiner (1839-1914), who assisted in the work from February 15, 1881, until December 1, 1882, and then served as the full-time minister until January 1, 1886; Howard Miller (1849-1907), who labored briefly from 1886 to 1887; E. A. Orr (1854-1924), who ministered from April 24, 1887, until July 1, 1889; and I. M. Gibson (1861- ), who preached from September 1, 1889 to April 1, 1890.

About the time the Baptist Temple was located on Broad Street in North Philadelphia, members of Philadelphia First Church erected a new stone structure at the corner of Carlisle and Dauphin Streets, close to Broad Street. The lot was purchased in June, 1890, at a cost of \$8,900 and a new building was dedicated on May 3, 1891. The building committee erected a new stone building with emphasis upon "neatness and plainness as against vanity and extravagance."<sup>6</sup> Although the construction committee at first proposed a church with a steeple, the congregation voted for a building without a steeple or towers. W. J. Swigart, a teacher at Juniata College, preached at both the morning and evening services on the day of dedication.

The congregation called Tobias Timothy Myers (1865-1929) from Illinois to become the first pastor at the new location. At the time Bro. Myers preached his first sermon (April 26, 1891), the church had seventy-four members and was continuing to meet in Columbia Hall. Bro. Myers ministered to the church from April 26, 1891, to May 1, 1901. From September 1, 1899, to July 1, 1901, Charles C. Ellis assisted in the pastoral work. Walter S. Long served as the associate pastor from May 1, 1901, until May 1, 1902, at which time Bro. Myers returned from a year of service to the Germantown congregation to assume his responsibilities as full-time pastor at Philadelphia First Church.

T. T. Myers, as he was commonly known, was born in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, the son of Tobias and Eliza Berkley Myers. He attended Mount Morris College (Illinois), graduating in 1890. During his pastoral years in Philadelphia, he graduated from the National

School of Elocution and Oratory (1893), the Neff College of Oratory (1894), Temple College (1894) and Crozer Theological Seminary (1902). He was honored by a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1905 by Juniata College. When he resigned his work in Philadelphia, he became the professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Juniata College School of Theology (1907).

Bro Myers married Salome A. Stoner of Indiana on September 28, 1893. Mrs. Myers died on March 11, 1894. In 1895, T. T. Myers and H. B. Brumbaugh visited the Holy Lands. He married a second time on June 23, 1897, taking Florence Harshbarger of the Spring Run congregation as his wife. He was advanced to the eldership at the First Church on October 4, 1906.

Shortly before Bro. Myers began his ministry with the congregation, the church entered into contract with H. C. Lowry to conduct the music programs for a monthly salary of \$12. The contract called for his presence at both morning and evening services on Sunday, at the Sunday School meeting in the afternoon and at the instruction period and rehearsals one night each week. In June, 1891, Lewis T. Grater assumed the same contract for \$12.50.<sup>7</sup>

Philadelphia First Church was one of the first Brethren churches to use a musical instrument in its worship services. The congregation used a small organ in its Sunday School services as early as 1872. On February 10, 1873, a new and larger organ and stool was purchased for \$161 and was placed in the Sunday School room in the basement of the Marshall Street building. Eventually, someone "forgot to return it to the basement" and the organ gradually became part of the sanctuary worship.<sup>8</sup> In 1891, when the new structure at Carlisle and Dauphin Streets was completed, it contained a new organ.

The Sunday School work of Philadelphia First Church began on June 4, 1856. Henry Geiger was very influential in organizing the first Sunday School. The record book of the congregation contains the notation that the work was begun with "Henry Geiger, president, and Joseph A. Price, superintendent."<sup>9</sup> A Mite Society was formed in 1861 for the purpose of providing suitable clothing for the youth of the neighborhood. Hannah Keyser created a permanent Poor Fund as early as January 6, 1841.

The First Cradle Roll in the brotherhood is credited to Mrs. J. S. Thomas. Sudie Swyers, of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, moved to Philadelphia and met John Sperry Thomas, a young medical student. After they were married, Mrs. Thomas united with the Church of the Brethren (1865). Bro. Thomas served for a number of years as superintendent of the Sunday School; and Sister Thomas was active in the Mite Society, the Infant Department and the Home Department. She was a promoter of the Junior Christian Endeavor Society (1891), the organizer of the Cradle Roll (1891) and the promoter of the Young Peoples' Society (1892).

When T. T. Myers remarried, First Church purchased a two-story parsonage at 2414 North Seventeenth Street for \$3,200, plus costs of

transfer. Mary S. Geiger, a prominent benefactor and member of the church, gave \$1,000 toward its purchase and \$294.29 for the renovation work. The parsonage was occupied by the pastoral family until July, 1889, at which time it was rented. It was eventually sold on May 10, 1917 for \$2,750.00. On May 3, 1903, Mary S. Geiger took title to a three-story home at 2260 North Park Avenue and deeded it to the congregation on February 23, 1904. At the time, it was valued at \$6,250.00.<sup>10</sup> This home served as the parsonage for all the succeeding pastors until the property was sold in the 1950s.

The steady growth of the church at its new location called for a new building program. The church board recommendation on April 13, 1892, for a new Sunday School unit was approved by the church council "provided sufficient money is subscribed to justify the building committee to proceed with the work." The unit was completed by the fall of 1892 at a cost of \$5,000, entirely donated by Mary S. Geiger.

At the beginning of the 1900s, there were frequent and regular baptisms. The attendances were increasing and the interest in the love-feast services was commendable. On November 13, 1902, Bro. Myers reported, "Our lovefeast last Thursday evening was probably the largest ever held in the city. The spirit of it was helpful. Elder J. B. Brumbaugh of Huntingdon officiated."<sup>11</sup> In a report almost exactly a year later, the pastor reported, "The First Brethren Church of Philadelphia is too small for the growing congregation, and plans are being considered for enlarging the building."<sup>12</sup> In later years, Bro. Myers recalled that he had come to the city as a mere boy from the country. As the congregation and he worked together, the church grew like a mushroom.<sup>13</sup>

In 1904, the main sanctuary of the church was enlarged by the addition of twelve feet. The pulpit was moved back and a library, a classroom and a pastor's study were added. A tower was also constructed at the corner of the building. This extension, with the interior improvements, cost the church \$16,629.49. Martin G. Brumbaugh was the speaker for the services of dedication conducted on January 1, 1905.

When T. T. Myers accepted a teaching position at Juniata College, First Church called Charles A. Bame (1873-1950) to succeed him. Bro. Bame, who came from a pastorate at West Dayton, Ohio, assumed the work on October 1, 1907, and ministered to the congregation until January 31, 1910. A gifted public speaker, Bro. Bame was called to the ministry by the Eagle Creek Church of the Brethren in Northwestern Ohio (1895). On September 12, 1901, he was married to Caroline M. Myers of the Mount Pleasant Church, Indiana.

Charles A. Bame resigned his work in Philadelphia to be ordained to the eldership in the Brethren Church (Ashland group). Succeeding Bro. Bame in the pastorate at First Church was Daniel Webster Kurtz (1879-1949). The membership selected from among four nominees and "by a rising vote the church expressed an almost unanimous desire to have Bro. D. W. Kurtz serve." He was frequently described as "a master on the platform and in the pulpit."<sup>14</sup> He ministered to the con-

gregation from March 14, 1910, until September 1, 1914.

Daniel Webster Kurtz, the son of John and Mary Bollinger Kurtz, was born near Hartville, Ohio. He joined the Church of the Brethren at the East Nimishillen congregation of Northeastern Ohio on May 5, 1899. He was called to the ministry at the Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, Church of the Brethren (1904); advanced to the second degree ministry at the Brooklyn First Church (April, 1906) and was elected to the eldership at Philadelphia First Church (1914). On September 7, 1909, he was married to Ethel Leonora Wheeler, a direct descendant of the noted Jonathan Edwards.

D. W. Kurtz was a student of Mount Union College, Alliance, Ohio (1897-1903), Juniata College (1903-1905), Yale University (1905-1908) and spent time under a fellowship at the Universities of Leipzig, Berlin and Marburg, Germany (1908-1909). While he was pastor of Philadelphia First Church, he attended the University of Pennsylvania (1910-1911) and was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree from Juniata College (1911).

A short time after Bro. Kurtz began his pastorate, a correspondent from the church observed, "The Holy Spirit is working in our midst, for quite an awakening is manifest."<sup>15</sup> The custom of extending an invitation to accept Christ at each morning service and baptizing applicants at the evening service was in vogue at the time. Bro. Kurtz taught a teacher training class and six persons were graduated in October, 1911. Martin G. Brumbaugh addressed the class on the duties of a successful teacher.

In this period, the city of Philadelphia was experiencing decisive change. The advent of the automobile about 1910 as a novel public conveyance transformed the city streets into asphalt thoroughfares. Jitneys moved north and south on Broad Street, charging a five-cent fare. The influx of immigrants from Europe and of black people from the South converted the city into a metropolis of human beings living along congested streets. The wealthier families began their exodus to the out-lying districts. About this time we read from a First Church report:

" . . . we held a special members' meeting in order to revise our Church Directory. As the members are scattered throughout the city and changing of address is constantly taking place, it is difficult to keep in touch with all of them."<sup>16</sup>

Philadelphia First Church has always maintained a strong missionary program. Members of the congregation were responsible for the formation of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church, Bethany Church of the Brethren and the Calvary Church of the Brethren. Many of the activities of the congregation carried a missionary thrust. For example, when Christmas exercises were conducted on December 24, 1911, the roll of classes was called and each responded with a special offering. Some of these offerings were designated for the church, some for the Sunday School and still others for home and foreign missions.<sup>17</sup>

A church news comment of 1912 stated that the pastor had been in poor health for some time. He was threatened with nervous prostration

and, on the advice of a physician, he and his family moved for a time to Connecticut to rest. Constant references were made during Bro. Kurtz's pastorate to his "powerful", "forceful" and "energetic" messages. The editor of this volume was told, while he was the pastor of the congregation in the 1940s, that D. W. Kurtz would walk the streets of Philadelphia for an hour or more after Sunday services to release the tensions which had been built during the day.

D. W. Kurtz was frequently absent in the four years he ministered to First Church. He was constantly under pressure to write and to lecture. His experiences in the North Atlantic District laid the foundations for his popular lectures throughout the brotherhood and the world. He prepared *An Outline of The Fundamental Doctrines of Faith* while he was in Philadelphia. Early in 1913, he gave a series of lectures at Juniata College on *Church History*. These lectures were expanded into a small volume entitled, *Nineteen Centuries of the Christian Church* (1914). The *Outline of the Fundamental Doctrines of Faith* was incorporated into a brotherhood publication entitled, *Studies In Doctrine and Devotion*, prepared by D. W. Kurtz, C. C. Ellis and S. S. Blough. Late in 1913, Bro. Kurtz delivered a series of lectures on *The Parables*. When he returned from a trip to Switzerland and the Holy Land, he prepared a series of lectures on these travels.

A number of persons from Philadelphia First Church attended the Zurich World Sunday School Convention in 1913. M. G. and Mrs. Brumbaugh, D. W. and Mrs. Kurtz, Flora Parks and Elmira Price were in attendance. Prior to the departure of these members, an impressively large lovefeast was conducted. Eight ministers were present to assist in the service: Brethren J. T. Myers, M. C. Swigart, M. G. Brumbaugh, Jacob Booz, A. J. Culler, L. M. Keim, W. I. Book and D. W. Kurtz.

Martin Grove Brumbaugh (1862-1930) united by certificate with the Philadelphia First Church on May 5, 1912, and remained identified with the congregation until his death. He was born in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, the son of George Boyer and Martha Peightal Brumbaugh. He received his formal education at Juniata College and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D., 1895). He was honored with degrees from seven universities and colleges. At the age of twenty-two, he served as superintendent of the Huntingdon County Schools. He was president of Juniata College (1895-1906; 1924-1930) and was superintendent of schools in the city of Philadelphia (1906-1915) before he was elected Governor of Pennsylvania (1915-1919). He was twice married. In 1884, he married Anna Konigmacher of Ephrata, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Brumbaugh died in June, 1914. While he was Governor of the Commonwealth, M. G. Brumbaugh married Flora Belle Parks (January 29, 1916) in a service conducted at the Philadelphia First Church by George Kuns.

The congregation observed its centennial on October 16, 1913. A committee, consisting of Roland L. Howe, Mary S. Geiger and Martin G. Brumbaugh, prepared a notable series of events for the occasion. The crowded meetings heard addresses by Roland L. Howe ("A Cent-

ury of the Brethren in Philadelphia"), M. G. Brumbaugh ("The Setting of our People in the History of Religion"), S. B. Heckman ("The Greatest Religious Writer of Colonial America"), T. T. Myers ("Loyalty To The Ideals of the Church"), John Wanamaker, who spoke concerning the Sunday School movement and W. S. Price ("Counting The Cost"). Bro. Price, an early Sunday School superintendent at First Church, observed,

"Two hundred years ago in Europe, the religion of the state was supposed to be the religion of the citizen. Our Brethren paid a heavy price for dissenting from this opinion. Religion for them was not a set of rules or enactments to be changed with the king."<sup>18</sup>

Greetings to the congregation from the Commonwealth were extended through the Honorable Samuel W. Pennypacker, former Governor of the state (1903-1907). A collector of *Americana*, having more than 10,000 volumes with emphasis on colonial Pennsylvania, he was a thorough student of history. Former Governor Pennypacker praised the conservatism of the Brethren, particularly the conservatism of the Brethren women as contrasted with existing standards of society.

At the centennial celebration, all the surviving members of the Crown Street Church were recognized. These were: Mary S. Geiger, Sudie M. Thomas, Catharine A. Hartmann, Silas H. Thomas, Daniel E. Clemmer, Edna S. Haldeman, Lydia Ashmore, Robert I. Evans, Mary Supplee Evans, Sarah H. Dome, Mary E. Markley, Harrison Walton and Elizabeth Thomas.<sup>19</sup>

D. W. Kurtz resigned the pastorate effective August 1, 1914, to accept the presidency of McPherson College in Kansas. The pastoral committee, under the chairmanship of W. I. Book, searched for candidates. When the committee reported to the church council on July 27, 1914, the membership extended an unanimous call to George Dilling Kuns of McLouth, Kansas.

George Dilling Kuns (1877- ) was the son of John Leslie and Mary Ann Dilling Kuns of Cerro Gordo, Illinois. In 1888, his family moved from Illinois to McPherson, Kansas, in order to provide the children with an education in a Church of the Brethren school. Bro. Kuns graduated from McPherson College (1902) and Kansas State University (1904). McPherson College conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts (1904). At the age of sixteen, Bro. Kuns was baptized as a member of the Church of the Brethren and was called to the ministry by the McPherson congregation in 1897. He spent four years in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, graduating in 1907. George D. Kuns married Elizabeth Mae Wieand of Wooster, Ohio, in 1902.

The new pastor arrived in Philadelphia on September 24, 1914. A few days later, the Sunday School of First Church participated in the annual Sunday School parade sponsored by the Sunday School organization of Philadelphia. One correspondent said,

"It was a beautiful sight to see thousands of people marching the streets in the name of King Immanuel, from the Cradle Roll, in their baby coaches, to the aged in wagons and automobiles. . . Many

carried open Bibles and hymn books.”<sup>20</sup>

On November 5, 1914, the congregation observed its fall lovefeast. “We were pleased to have with us. . . Governor-elect M. G. Brumbaugh, who but two days before had been elected by a sweeping majority.”<sup>21</sup> Former educator and minister of the Church of the Brethren, Bro. Brumbaugh was a member of the Philadelphia congregation and was active in its life. In keeping with the traditions of the denomination, he refused to be sworn into office but chose to affirm his loyalty to the constitution.

Shortly after Bro. Kuns began his pastoral work, the city of Philadelphia experienced a great Christian revival under the leadership of Billy Sunday. “Never has so much Bible and religion been talked in Philadelphia as now”, wrote Mrs. William H. B. Schnell, an active worker of the First Church. Between September, 1914, and April, 1915, fifty individuals were added to the church by baptism and confession. In April, J. H. Cassady, of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, conducted an evangelistic meeting at the church. One hundred confessions of faith were offered. The prayer meeting services averaged more than sixty persons.<sup>22</sup> One of the largest lovefeast services was observed on May 6, 1915. “Many for the first time took part in the Lord’s Supper.”

John M. Fogelsanger, an active trustee of the First Church, recalled his experiences at this time. “Our church was in the midst of a revival at the time, following the extended campaign of Billy Sunday in our city.”<sup>23</sup> Bro. Fogelsanger was not an active member of the church until he united with the First Church in 1915. After twenty years of wandering in and out of many churches, he responded to an invitation to unite with First Church. An advertiser and publisher in the city prior to World War I, he now became active in the life of the congregation and remained so until his death in 1936. He once confessed that “deep in his soul he found comfort in the simplicity of faith of the Dunker he could find nowhere else.”<sup>24</sup>

As the congregation grew, the basement of the building was arranged into Sunday School rooms to care for the over-crowding. “The Beginners’ and the Young Men’s Adult Classes are crowded for room”, one writer noted. When Mrs. J. S. Thomas moved from the city in 1916, Sister Jacob L. Markley succeeded to the work in the Primary Department.

The Governor of Pennsylvania made frequent appearances at the church services during his tenure in office. One reads of overflow crowds when he addressed audiences. On October 15, 1916, he left his executive offices to preach a sympathetic testimonial sermon in honor of Mary Schwenk Geiger who died on September 7, 1916. The entire southeastern section of Pennsylvania and many brotherhood agencies lost a benevolent and beautiful person in the passing of Sister Geiger.

Mary S. Geiger (1828-1916) was the daughter of Jacob and Mary G. Schwenk of Schwenksville, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. When

she married Henry Geiger of Montgomery County on October 26, 1852, she also united with the Church of the Brethren. Historian Roland L. Howe wrote of her, "The late elder, Bro. John Fox, was baptized by



Elder Peter Keyser, Jr., January 17, 1813, and Mary S. Geiger was baptized by Elder John Fox, December 30, 1852."

Sister Geiger ministered faithfully and completely in an outreach ministry which has seldom been equaled. She gave liberally to many brotherhood projects, including an orphanage in France which was operated in 1904 by the Church of the Brethren. She shared with such institutions as the Midnight Mission, the Sunday Breakfast Association, the Salvation Army, Sheltering Arms For Fallen Women, The Door of Hope For Friendless Girls, Whosoever Mission, the Florence Crittendom Home, day nurseries and other benevolent associations.

Many institutions sent representatives to the memorial service which was conducted at First Church by the Mothers' Society. Those who spoke reminded the congregation that she seldom waited to be asked to render aid, but wherever she saw need "her great heart opened and forthwith came Christlike benevolence."<sup>26</sup>

On March 17, 1918, a memorial plaque was unveiled in First Church to honor her:

## In Cherished Memory

of

MRS. MARY SCHWENK GEIGER

1828-1916

MOTHER SPIRIT OF THIS CHURCH

Governor M. G. Brumbaugh was present at the unveiling to speak of Sister Geiger's character. In his usual eloquent language he stated,

"Being quiet, humble and modest, she became the queen of us all. We trusted her and followed her gladly. . . Her counsel and example were wholesome, helpful and blessed. She listened to the call of the needy and in this great city many do not know the source of their help. She knew us all, but withheld her criticism. I cannot recall that she made a single unkind remark about any human being."<sup>27</sup>

George D. Kuns resigned his work to become pastor of the Geiger Memorial Church (April 22, 1918). "He was liked and beloved, both in the church and in the community." During his pastorate at First Church, the congregation received from an unnamed donor a complete set of individual communion cups. These were used for the first time in 1917 at the spring communion. Also during his pastorate, the congregation received 186 persons by baptism and forty-two by church letter. The church treasurer was able to announce at the conclusion of Bro. Kuns' pastorate: "The finances of the church are in better shape than they have been for some time, the church being practically out of debt."<sup>28</sup>

In September, 1918, the preaching was done by H. W. Rohrer, J. C. Flora, Galen K. Walker, Ross D. Murphy and L. M. Keim. One member said of Bro. Murphy's preaching: "His message is so interesting and convincing that if you hear him once, you will want to hear him again."<sup>29</sup> In October, the church and the Sunday School were closed by the Philadelphia Board of Health because of the raging influenza epidemic. During the period from September 23 to October 30, 1918, 47,094 cases of influenza were reported in the city and 11,960 deaths were recorded.<sup>30</sup> On October 16th alone, 711 persons of the city died.

The church council decided on November 4, 1918, to employ C. C. Ellis, the new vice-president of Juniata College, to supply the pulpit until February, 1919, provided a resident pastor was not found in the meantime. Bro. Ellis was completing his seminary work at Temple University and was giving his time to his responsibilities at Juniata College.

Charles Calvert Ellis (1874-1950) was born in Washington, D. C., the oldest child of Henry J. and Kate Kane Ellis. Prior to his only pastorate in Philadelphia, he graduated from Juniata College (1898), Illinois Wesleyan (A.M., 1903; Ph.D., 1904), the University of Pennsylvania

(Ph.D., 1907) and Temple University (B.D., 1920). He was called to the ministry by the Huntingdon Church of the Brethren (1894) after he united with the Church of the Brethren at Woodberry, Maryland. He was married to Emma S. Nice, of Perkiomenville, Pennsylvania, on December 25, 1902.

Bro. Ellis ministered to Philadelphia First Church as a supply pastor between November 17, 1918, and April 28, 1919. He was then called to full-time service by the congregation, in which capacity he served until July 1, 1921. Bro. Ellis recalled these years in the pastorate:

“My own pastoral experience was all in the First Church of Philadelphia. There I had the privilege of a year’s association with that pioneer prince of pastors, Bro. T. T. Myers. Later, I held the pastorate for three years, during two of which I had as my associate one of our pioneer missionaries, H. Stover Kulp. It goes without saying that in both instances I was most fortunate.”<sup>31</sup>

C. C. Ellis conducted Saturday evening Bible Institutes during the winter of 1918-1919. “Interest in these services grew gradually.” Bro. Ellis used such sermon themes as the following: “What Time Is It On The Clock of The Ages?”; “Is The World Growing Better?”; “Will Jesus Come Again?”; “What Is The Millennium?” and “Why I Preach The Second Coming.”

The Sunday School of First Church observed an anniversary celebration on May 9, 1920. At this time, the hour of meeting was changed from the afternoon to the morning. Earlier Sunday School superintendents were invited to address the congregation. W. S. Price, Stephen S. Brownback, Roland C. Evans and Roland L. Howe were speakers.

C. C. Ellis submitted his resignation as pastor to become effective on July 1, 1921. H. Stover Kulp, who had been called as the associate pastor on April 28, 1919, succeeded as the full-time pastor. In the summer of 1921, the first Vacation Bible School was conducted by the pastor and his wife. In the fall and winter of 1921-1922, there were many visiting ministers in the First Church pulpit since Bro. Kulp was absent to prepare himself for his career as a missionary. Ross D. Murphy and Charles A. Bame spoke frequently during the months of October and November in 1921.

H. Stover and Ruth Kulp invited Dr. Kumm of the Sudan United Mission to visit the congregation in 1921. At this time Bro. Kulp expressed concern for the delay which was keeping the African door closed to them in their proposed mission venture. The visiting preacher suggested that they might wish to form a group of prayer-partners---forty men and women of their acquaintance---who were interested in missions and who would be willing to pray daily that Ruth and Stover Kulp might be able to serve in Africa before the close of 1922. Such a fellowship was formed in the spring of 1922. H. Stover Kulp later described this fellowship as one of the greatest experiences of his life.<sup>32</sup>

H. Stover Kulp was ordained as an elder on May 24, 1922. The church also voted to give financial support to the Kulp's whenever they began their work on the mission field. On November 1, 1922, H. Stover

and Ruth Kulp relinquished the Philadelphia pastorate for service in Nigeria. The congregation observed a meaningful lovefeast service with the Kulp's on November 2, 1922.

The church was without a pastor from November 1, 1922 to October 22, 1923. T. T. Myers visited the church to preach at the dedication of a new organ on November 5, 1922, using as his theme, "Art In Religion." The new organ was purchased for \$4,647.25. Visiting pastors preached for the congregation during the next eleven months. These included Ross D. Murphy, Jacob A. Bricker, T. L. Fretz, J. C. Forney, Harry W. Rohrer, J. S. Noffsinger, Charles A. Bame, Frank F. Holsopple, M. R. Wolfe, A. B. Miller, Frank J. Byer, H. K. Ober, M. Clyde Horst, M. C. Swigart, William Kinsey, J. H. Hollinger and B. F. Waltz.<sup>33</sup>

The denominational magazine carried the following announcement in December, 1922:

"Bro. H. Stover Kulp sailed for Africa; we are left without a pastor. Will you unite with us in prayer that our Heavenly Father will open the way and send the brother whom He knows, in His Divine Wisdom, will shepherd His flock here? We have prevailed upon Bro. Ross D. Murphy to help us. While his duties at the University are strenuous, he has kindly filled the pulpit thus far, for which we are grateful."

Bro. Ross D. Murphy and his wife Florence were both pursuing graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania and were working in the Department of Psychology. Miles E. Murphy (1900-1958), a brother to Ross, was also working in the university and shared some preaching assignments at First Church.

A note early in 1923 observed that Ross D. Murphy will "serve as directing pastor until a regular pastor is found."<sup>34</sup> For the next twenty-two years no other pastor was found. Early in 1924, Bro. Murphy not only was elected pastor but became the presiding elder of the church as well. At the same time, J. Omar Good became the church clerk, a position he held until the 1950s.

Ross D. Murphy (1882-1962), born near Elton in Cambria County, Pennsylvania, was the son of Scott and Mary Rummel Murphy. A graduate of Juniata College Normal School (1906) and Juniata College (1912), he pursued graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania (1917, 1921). He was called to the ministry by the Shade Creek congregation of Western Pennsylvania (1904) and was advanced to the eldership by the Pipe Creek congregation of Maryland (November 4, 1921). He was the Sunday School secretary for the Western District of Pennsylvania (1913), representing that district at the Zurich World Sunday School Convention. He also labored as the Field Secretary for the General Mission Board (1914-1915). On December 22, 1918, he was married to Sara Florence Fogelsanger of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Murphy united with the Church of the Brethren at First Church on March 31, 1907 during the pastorate of T. T. Myers.

Under the leadership of Bro. and Sister Murphy, First Church estab-

lished a number of traditional services and programs. One of these services was the dedication of infants at worship services:

"A mother brought her seven weeks' old baby to the church to be presented to the Lord. It was the first place the mother had taken the baby girl. The service of consecration was impressive and solemn.<sup>35</sup> There were also "get-acquainted" meetings for the sake of students who came to the church services. White Gift programs were annually observed in dramatic and impressive forms. In 1923, the classes and departments presented their gifts before a pulpit which was draped in white with a prominent white cross on display. In this year, more than \$400 was given for the church's outreach ministries.

The church began to publish a printed directory of the membership in 1924. This roll of members contained interesting insights concerning the history of the congregation and enumerated twenty-two ministers who served the church from the time of Peter Keyser, Jr.

In 1924, Bro. and Sister Murphy represented the Church of the Brethren at the World Sunday School Convention in Glasgow, Scotland. They sailed on June 14 aboard the *S.S. Leviathan* and returned on August 8. In May, before they sailed, the church observed a lovefeast service with 198 persons in attendance, including nine local ministers.

When word arrived in the congregation of the premature death of Ruth Royer Kulp, First Church paused to observe her memory. On June 29, 1924, Esther N. Swigart was present to relate her memories of experiences she had shared with Ruth while they attended Juniata College. Later in the year, the congregation voted to give \$500 annually to missions as a memorial to Sister Kulp.

The year 1926 was an eventful one for the congregation. A reception was given to H. Stover Kulp early in the year as he greeted old friends and related his experiences in pioneer mission work. The seventieth anniversary of the Church School was observed with appropriate ceremonies on June 6. Six members from the Crown Street Church were present at the anniversary: Mrs. J. S. Thomas, Mary Supplee Evans, E. C. Hartmann, Mrs. Minnie Markley, Lee Haldeman and Harry Hartmann. Mary Supplee Evans recalled the experiences of her baptism:

"On a bright, cold Sunday about the middle of March, 1866, eighteen of us were baptized in the Delaware River by Brethren Spanogle and Custer. As we crossed the river in a steamboat, to get low shore water, we sang many of the dear old hymns until the cabin rang with our voices."<sup>36</sup>

The church building was rededicated to the service of God on October 7, 1926. The building was completely renovated with new lighting, new carpeting and paint. A new memorial window in honor of Mary S. Geiger had been installed during the summer as a gift from the Mothers' Society of the congregation. Three members addressed the congregation on dedication day concerning their earlier experiences. James Harley, the oldest deacon, related his experiences as a deacon. Elder J. A. Bricker, the assistant church elder, spoke of some of his

early experiences in the ministry. He recalled that before he was called to the ministry in 1882, he had never made a public prayer. Frequently he and his family went to church in Maryland by wagons and sometimes by sleds drawn by oxen or mules.<sup>37</sup>

Roland L. Howe, the First Church historian, gathered much information concerning the life of the congregation. He shared some of these stories with the church. He showed an old Crown Street Bible, the fly leaf of which contained an ink inscription: "German Baptist Church, 1870." This old meetinghouse was commonly known in the city as "the Peter Keyser Church" and was attended by people of all denominations, including Roman Catholics.

In the course of its unique history, First Church has had many ministers on its membership rolls. Many of these people were drawn into the service ministries of the congregation as teachers, preachers or mission workers. For example, T. L. Fretz was called by the congregation into special Christian service when he worked as superintendent of the Christian Workers' Union of Philadelphia. Jesse D. Reber (1897- ) led the congregation as Sunday School superintendent while he resided in the city (1924-1928). The congregation honored Bro. and Sister Reber with a farewell when they departed to assume the pastorate of the Shippensburg Church (1928-1935).

The membership was saddened by the deaths of several members who led the church for many years. Lydia H. Buckwalter, who died on November 20, 1928, was one of the first choristers of the congregation and directed the earliest choirs. T. T. Myers, a former pastor, passed from this life on May 30, 1929. The trustees of the church conducted the memorial service for a beloved pastor who ministered to the congregation for nearly sixteen years. Addresses were given by H. C. Alderfer, Frank R. Widdowson, A. C. Schoefield and Rowland C. Evans.

Martin G. Brumbaugh died suddenly on March 14, 1930. The congregation met for a tribute to his life on March 30th. J. M. Fogelsanger and William I. Book spoke of their experiences with him in the life of the congregation. They recalled his interest in history and his collection of books printed on the Sower Press of Germantown. They also remembered the significant role he played in the enactment of a school code for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which has been described as "the most extensive and radical instance of legislation that has ever been accomplished in a single act in this country."<sup>38</sup>

Bro. J. M. Fogelsanger said of former Governor Brumbaugh:

"One of the most pathetic aspects of his life was the separation from his books for the past several years. He looked forward with great joy to the time when his treasured collection of books could be restored to him in the new house the college (at Juniata) had under construction and which was finished only a few weeks before his death."<sup>39</sup>

A former student characterized him as follows: "He was the possessor of a great mind, which he always exercised for the welfare of humanity and to the glory of God. As an outstanding leader in education, politi-

tics and civic affairs, he never compromised his commitment to his strong religious principles."<sup>40</sup>

One of the extremely active organizations of Philadelphia First Church was the Women's Council. This organization assumed form in March, 1926, when Florence F. Murphy, Sadie I. Schnell and Ruth Brumbaugh were chosen as officers. On October 21, 1929, a Church of the Brethren Women's Rally for the Philadelphia area met in First Church. Two hundred women from ten district churches met for three purposes:

- 1). To become better acquainted;
- 2). To unite concerning problems of the church and city as concerned women; and
- 3). To bring about unity and cooperation by closer bonds of fellowship.

Sadie I. Schnell later commented about the work of women in the church:

"I thank God that the women of our church have found some God-given latent power within. What can not woman with her intuition and enthusiasm accomplish when she dedicates herself and God consecrates her? . . . We know that it is God's will that the General Mission Board deficit shall be wiped out. . . ."<sup>41</sup>

Sunday School and church services were showing increasing activities and interest. A Christian Endeavor organization involved young men and women in services at the Galilee Mission in a slum section of Philadelphia once a month. In 1927, the church hosted two college groups in a public debate. The Juniata College debate team defeated the Haverford College team on the question: "Resolved: that the United States Government should cancel the debts owed it by the Allied nations growing out of the World War." Reports concerning the Sunday School under the leadership of Lester M. Rosenberger showed an average attendance of 245 persons.

The church also sponsored very active Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations. Mrs. Florence Murphy conducted a Week Day Bible School in the church (1929). Mrs. Murphy's interest in Women's Work was not confined to the local church but extended to the national level. She reported frequently in *The Gospel Messenger* concerning the progress which was being made toward national objectives. The local Women's Council, under her leadership, conducted Sunday evening schools of missions and distributed Lenten offering envelopes for the support of mission projects.

First Church frequently took the initiative in effecting change in the life of the district and the brotherhood. In 1927, the church petitioned the district meeting and the annual conference for a committee of three to study for one year the advisability of electing deacons on a term basis rather than for life. The paper was not considered by conference at this time, although the problem was raised by other congregations of the brotherhood until the request was granted in 1956.

First Church, like most congregations of the brotherhood, observed a

closed communion, open only to members in good fellowship with the Church of the Brethren. On April 28, 1930, the church council authorized the pastor to extend an invitation to any Christian present at the lovefeast who was willing to participate in the threefold rite the opportunity to do so. Here again the church was three decades in advance of the brotherhood on extending fellowship to all Christians.

The church paused on May 10, 1931, to observe its fortieth anniversary at Carlisle and Dauphin Streets. The guest of honor for the occasion was Mrs. J. S. Thomas, who was nearly eighty years of age. Roland L. Howe presided at the meeting at which Mrs. H. H. Funk, A. C. Schoefield, Mrs. J. S. Thomas, Mrs. C. C. Hartmann and Mrs. William H. B. Schnell spoke.

During the depression years, the congregation maintained a strong outreach ministry. The members were supporting Clarence and Lucille Heckman on the Nigerian mission field (1932). The Ladies' Aid Society maintained a busy schedule: "there is no depression in our Aid", someone wrote. The White Gift offering for 1931 reached \$270.42 and the Thanksgiving offering for the same year was nearly \$1,000.

The tradition of a Washington Birthday dinner for Sunday School scholars began in 1933. The dinner was offered to all persons who brought new scholars to the school, to the new scholars themselves and to all who had perfect attendance for a stated period of time. This custom continued during the years the congregation worshipped at Carlisle and Dauphin Streets.

Roland L. Howe (1872-1963), an active deacon of First Church and a respected district historian, began to contribute articles to *The Gospel Messenger* depicting the life of the Philadelphia congregation. Bro. Howe was a graduate from Juniata College (1894) and from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (1919). He became a member of First Church on October 16, 1892. In his years of membership in Philadelphia, he was a trustee, a Sunday School superintendent, a teacher, a deacon and church historian. Bro. Howe spent many hours in gleaning the church records for interesting insights into the congregation's life. In 1932, he presented to the church a complete alphabetical list of all the people who had been members of the church for the previous 115 years. The church was featured on the front cover of the brotherhood periodical on January 7, 1933.

An appreciative congregation gave a surprise to the pastor and his wife for their decade of service to the church. On October 23, 1932, Bro. and Sister Murphy were delighted to see a large attendance at the Sunday School. They suspected nothing unusual until Bro. Roland L. Howe requested opportunity to make an announcement at the morning service. Bro. Howe spoke briefly and then introduced W. I. Book, who delivered a sermon to the assembled congregation on "Christian Service." He commended the pastor and his wife for their faithful service to the church. Twelve young girls presented Bro. and Sister Murphy with a rose each and the camp boys presented chrysanthemums to them. A beautiful clock and candlestick were also presented

by several organizations of the church.

The Women's Work program was firmly established in the life of the brotherhood and First Church by the 1930s. One member said, "The Society of Women's Work is the most active organization in the church." Through Lenten offering envelopes, the organization raised \$1,070.88 between the years 1927 and 1934. It sponsored a reception for Ida C. Shumaker, a missionary (1933), promoted mission studies (1934) and assisted in supplying forty Junior Choir gowns for the choir which was under the direction of Orca Miller Burritt.

Hannah Ritchey Funk, president of the Women's Work Society, presented a special paper to the church council on June 17, 1935. The paper recommended, on behalf of the women of the congregation, that Florence Fogelsanger Murphy be granted a license to preach. The church responded by calling Sister Murphy to the ministry on July 17, 1935. She became the first woman in the congregation to be installed into the ministry.

Florence Fogelsanger Murphy was the daughter of Wendell Minnich Fogelsanger, an active deacon of the Ridge congregation in the Southern District of Pennsylvania. Mrs. Murphy's mother was Elizabeth N. Fogelsanger, the daughter of Elder John Newcomer. Mrs. Murphy received an A. B. degree from Juniata College (1912), an A. M. degree from the University of Pennsylvania (1916) and a Ph.D. degree from the same university in 1917. Always active as a speaker and a teacher, she was also elected president of Women's Work in 1929. She remained active on the national council of Women's Work until 1941. In the absence of her husband, she frequently supplied the pulpit at First Church.

The church lost two active members by death between 1937 and 1938. On December 31, 1937, Elder Jacob A. Bricker (1855-1937) died. He became a member of the Church of the Brethren at the Old Dunker Church in Antietam, Maryland. The son of George W. and Nancy Kline Bricker, he was born near Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Elected to the ministry in West Virginia (1883), Bro. Bricker became an early pastor in a city mission located in Northwest Baltimore. J. A. Bricker married Margaret Isabel Utz of Maryland. Just a few weeks before his death, the Brickers celebrated their fifty-ninth wedding anniversary.

The Brickers became members of Philadelphia First Church in 1917 after they moved from Baltimore, Maryland. He was active in the life of the congregation as a preacher, a moderator for church councils and frequently served as a representative to district meetings and the Annual Conference Standing Committee. Memorial services were conducted at the church by Milton C. Swigart and Ross D. Murphy.

Sally Bright Schnell, another active church worker, died on January 5, 1938. Born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on February 3, 1865, she married William H. B. Schnell of Philadelphia. She became active in the life of the congregation from the time she was received as a member until the time of her death (1887-1938). She promoted a Week Day Bible School that met each Wednesday from four to five o'clock at First

Church. In 1937, the average attendance was 100 children meeting in eleven classes. She was tireless in her work on behalf of Women's Work and she was a trustee of the Neffsville Orphanage.

Bro. and Sister Murphy found remarkable opportunities for service in the city pastorate. "Not only are there more opportunities for service", said Bro. Murphy, "but a city minister can accomplish more and have a richer experience." During his twenty-three years as pastor in Philadelphia, he was a representative to the Advisory Board of the American Bible Society, a member of the Committee for Conscientious Objectors at the outbreak of World War II and chairman of the Pastors' Association of the brotherhood during the 1930s. Always interested in encouraging younger men in the pastoral ministry, he frequently invited them to share lunch and fellowship with him in downtown Philadelphia restaurants. Shortly before World War II, Ross D. Murphy was elected president of the Philadelphia Federation of Churches. In this position, he was able to use his influence to keep the churches from being stampeded into buying war bonds. He was a frequent visitor to Army encampments to counsel Brethren draftees.

The women of First Church remained active during World War II in providing relief materials for overseas use. They met in a basement room of the church where they found space enough for two quilting frames, a sewing table and a sewing machine. Their organization produced more than a ton of relief materials for Europe in 1945.

In 1941, David Blickenstaff and John Barwick visited First Church to acquaint the membership with their work among the Spanish refugees. As a result of this visit, several young men of the congregation decided to devote themselves to humanitarian work by volunteering for Civilian Public Service assignments and for Brethren Volunteer projects. Howard Benton Burritt spent a year at Camp Kane in northern Pennsylvania and then was transferred to the West Coast of the nation to fight fires during World War II. Benjamin Franklin Hottel spent these war years in alternative service assignments, giving much time to office responsibilities in Elgin, Illinois.

In October, 1942, Mary A. Schaeffer, former missionary to China, became the church and Sunday School visitor. Born in Wintersville, Berks County, Pennsylvania, she completed her formal education at Elizabethtown College and Manchester College (1917) and attended Bethany Biblical Seminary whenever she was on furlough from the mission field. She completed her requirements for a Master's degree in Religious Education (1942) just before she began her work with First Church. Miss Schaeffer spent the years 1917-1924, 1925-1933, and 1934-1940, on the Chinese mission field, largely in the Shansi Province.

Catharine A. Hartmann died on January 29, 1943. Received into fellowship with First Church on September 6, 1874 at the age of twenty-one, she became the first organist for the congregation (1873). She was a great-great-great grand-daughter of Christopher Saur, the Germantown printer who came to America in 1724. She was the daughter of Isaiah G. and Mary Hobensack Harley. In terms of service, she

was the oldest deaconess of First Church at the time of her death.

The congregation observed its 130th anniversary in 1943. In October, Charles A. Bame, a former pastor, conducted a series of meetings for the church and concluded these with a lovefeast. During this commemorative year, the congregation published a comprehensive and detailed history of its unique life. Roland L. Howe, the local church historian, painstakingly researched materials which were published in the volume, *The History Of A Church*. The volume showed how the congregation blazed new trails in Sunday School work, the use of musical instruments, in developing the salaried pastoral work and in accepting Brethren from other congregations who were in disagreement with the denomination's restrictive dress codes.

After twenty-three years of stewardship as pastor and elder of First Church, Ross D. Murphy submitted his resignation. These were happy and fruitful years given to the congregation and the brotherhood. The home on Park Avenue was often opened to friends, missionaries and leaders of the church as they visited the city.

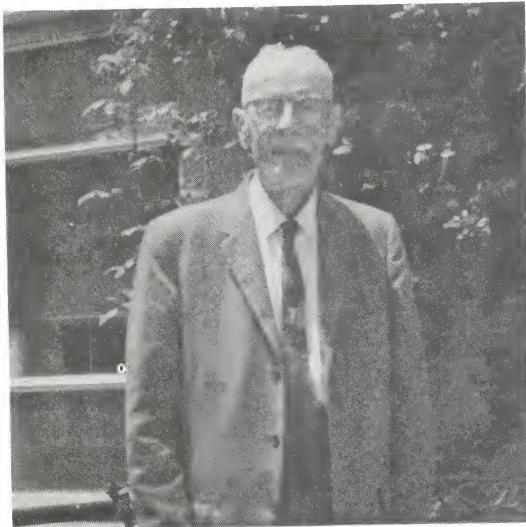
The church elected its assistant pastor, Elmer Q. Gleim, to succeed Bro. Murphy. Bro. Gleim moved from the pastorate of the Philadelphia Bethany Church into the work of assistant pastor of the First Church early in the summer of 1944. In the period 1944-1945, he visited families on behalf of the church and Sunday School, assisted in the worship services and shared in the preaching ministry. When Bro. Murphy presented his letter of retirement on January 3, 1945, the congregation voted shortly thereafter to employ Bro. Gleim as the new pastor, effective April 1st. He was installed on April 19, 1945, with Trostle P. Dick and Benjamin F. Waltz officiating.

Elmer Quentin Gleim (1917- ) was a recent graduate of Crozer Theological Seminary. He was born in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, the son of Quintin A. and Alverta Dohner Gleim. Baptized at the Harrisburg Church of the Brethren (1929), he was called to the ministry (1935) and ordained (1936) by his home congregation. He ministered as pastor of the Williamsburg Church of the Brethren (1940-1942) and the Bethany Church (1942-1944) prior to his work at First Church. On April 5, 1942, he was married to Ruth A. Rishel of York, Pennsylvania.

The congregation moved into a community-centered program with emphasis upon Friday evening clubs for boys and girls in cooperation with the Y. M. C. A. A movie projector was purchased and was used regularly in the Friday night program. The congregation was involved in many interdenominational programs on behalf of children and relief work.

In the fall of 1946, William Ira Book (1875-1968) was elected moderator of the congregation, succeeding Ross D. Murphy. He was the son of Edmund D. and Elizabeth Long Book of Perry County, Pennsylvania. A graduate of Juniata College (1896) and of the University of Pennsylvania (Ph. D., 1913), he was professor of physics from 1909 until his retirement in 1945 at the University of Pennsylvania. He was called to the ministry at the Three Springs Church (1897) and served briefly as past-

or of the Stonerstown Church of the Brethren in Bedford County (January, 1898-1899). He was advanced to the second degree ministry at the Raven Run congregation in Bedford County (1898). After his retirement from the university, the North Atlantic District advanced him to the office of elder (January 30, 1946).



*William I. Book*

William I. Book married Zella Benedict of Adams County, Pennsylvania on June 11, 1901. His wife preceded him in death on December 18, 1962 after sixty-one and a half years of happy marriage.

The years from 1945 until 1949 were dedicated to numerous relief ministries. At a candlelighting service in 1946, sixty pounds of candles were collected for relief. The Sunday School contributed more than \$250 for the purchase of "Seeds of Goodwill." About forty-five Sunday School volunteers met to pack the seeds into units for 150 families of Poland. M. R. Zigler, who made a survey of the needs of European countries in 1947, visited the church and spoke to a mass meeting of the Brethren in April.

Many members of the congregation recalled a Sunday morning, on April 29, 1917, when a young blind man, a student at the Overbrook School for the Blind, was baptized. Howard B. Burritt (1893-1958), who later graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, was regular in attendance at the services of First Church. He used three volumes of braille hymnals during the worship services. Bro. Burritt married Orca Z. Miller (1918), a director of youth choirs of First Church. In 1948, he typed a note of appreciation to the brotherhood offices for a braille copy of Rufus D. Bowman's volume, *The Church of the Brethren and War*.<sup>12</sup> After the death of Bro. Burritt, his collection of braille books was added to the Brethren Loan Library in Elgin, Illinois. These volumes, including *Seventy Times Seven*, by Rufus D. Bowman, the *John Milton*

*Collection of Christmas Carols and Songs, and Life Real and Portrayed*, by Rebecca Foutz, were made available to other blind folk of the brotherhood.

In the years Elmer Q. Gleim ministered to the church, committees and boards were discussing policies and programs for the rapidly-changing community. Ora Huston, representing the denomination, visited the church on a number of occasions to discuss various alternatives for the membership.

Bro. Gleim resigned the pastorate, effective July 1, 1949. He was succeeded by Edwin E. Crist (1921- ), a Brethren student attending the Eastern Baptist Seminary. Bro. Crist, the son of Harry and Lena Clapper Crist of Scalp Level, Pennsylvania, was installed into the ministry in 1949. He was married to Esther Whitney on August 25, 1948. Bro. Crist ministered to the church in 1949-1950.

D. Alfred Replogle (1919- ), pastor of the Williamsburg Church of the Brethren (1946-1950), accepted the call to minister at First Church. Prior to his arrival, William I. Book, Wilfred N. Staufer, Paul S. Hoover and Jesse L. Stayer supplied the pulpit. Bro. Replogle and his family arrived to live in the new parsonage which the church purchased at 6823 Sherman Street in Mount Airy. Bro. Replogle began his ministry with the congregation on September 1, 1950.

D. Alfred Replogle is the son of Arthur Landis and Eva Mae Detwiler Replogle of New Enterprise, Pennsylvania. A graduate of Juniata College (1942) and Bethany Theological Seminary (1945), he took a year of additional schooling at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was baptized at the Everett Church of the Brethren in 1929. The New Enterprise congregation licensed (1937) and ordained (1938) him to the ministry. He was married to Myra Phyllis Jamison of Middle Pennsylvania after his graduation from college (June 28, 1942).

"Things have been humming at the First Church since the Replogles arrived", said a correspondent. There were Sunday School fellowship meals at the church, after which the church conducted business meetings. These Sunday activities were often concluded with vespers services. Mary A. Schaeffer and C. C. Ellis were guests at several of the vespers. In the fall of the year, prayer meetings were conducted at the homes of the congregation's shut-ins.

On August 26, 1951, members of the congregation gathered for a farewell luncheon for Paul and Mary Elizabeth Hoover who had been active in First Church for more than six years. The Hoovers completed their medical education in the city and were assigned to a term of service as medical missionaries to India. The Hoovers set sail for India on October 13, 1951.

A letter from Charles E. Zunkel, executive secretary for the Ministry and Home Mission Commission, indicates a major concern of the congregation in the 1950s. The letter stated in part:

"It appears evident that most of those left in Philadelphia First Church are in no mood to continue to worship there as an interracial development. There does seem to be some interest in holding the

ownership of the church for the Brethren and to try to find Negro leadership.''<sup>43</sup>

A report made to the church in February, 1954, summarized the attitudes of the First Church members concerning their problem. Roland L. Howe, who surveyed the membership, reported that most of them were ready to relocate. A large percentage of the people felt that an interracial congregation was not the answer to the future of First Church. In this same year, the church council decided to relocate.

D. Alfred Reppogle resigned and was succeeded in the work by Marvin Clingenpeel (1954). A graduate of Bethany Biblical Seminary (1928), he ministered as pastor of the Bethel, Bethlehem and Oakton congregations before he accepted the Philadelphia pastorate. W. I. Book, D. Howard Keiper and B. F. Waltz installed him into his office with appropriate services.

The next four years were times of decisions and searchings. In 1955, the church purchased land on West Cheltenham Avenue outside the northwestern boundary of Philadelphia in Montgomery County. The first purchase, made in April, contained approximately one acre of land. Subsequent purchases provided the congregation with a total land area of slightly less than three acres at a total cost in excess of \$22,000. One of these plots of ground contained a carriage house. Before any of the purchases were made, all utilities and a sewer were installed. The church decided to purchase land in this area because the region was demonstrating rapid population growth.

In 1956, the sixty-five year old stone building at Carlisle and Dauphin Streets was sold to the Hopewell Baptist Church. Ground had already been broken for a new church structure at the edge of the city (June 24, 1956). From the time of the sale of the property at Carlisle and Dauphin Streets until the dedication of the new church building on West Cheltenham Avenue, the membership worshipped in the Seventh Day Adventist Church at Germantown and Rex Avenues (1956-1957). In the summer of 1957, Bro. Clingenpeel was assisted by Donald R. Flory, a student from Bethany Theological Seminary.

The first church services were held in a new brick, colonial design structure on September 8, 1957. The building consisted of a sanctuary which seats approximately 235 persons, an "L" wing which houses a large general purpose room. Services of dedication for the beautiful new, steepled structure were conducted on September 29, 1957, with Calvert N. Ellis as the speaker. The total cost of the building, land and furnishings amounted to \$192,022.47. As it had done a number of times before, the congregation acted to provide a more central location for a membership which was now spread over the northern section of Philadelphia and in suburban areas lying to the north and west of the city.

On August 3, 1958, Bro. Clingenpeel moved to the Middle River Church of the Brethren in Virginia. Before he concluded his work, he was present for the dedication of a new pipe organ in the church sanctuary. Helen Rosengren, a member of the congregation and a student of

the Curtis Institute of Music, was the guest soloist on the day of dedication (April 27, 1958). Thomas Richner, professor of organ at Teachers' College, Columbia University, was the guest organist for the day.

W. Clemens Rosenberger (1932- ), a recent graduate of Bethany Biblical Seminary, ministered to the congregation during the month of August, 1958. The son of Lester M. and Pauline Howe Rosenberger, he was a member of the congregation. W. Dean Crouse moved from Monroeville, Pennsylvania, to begin his pastoral work at First Church on September 1, 1958. A special service of installation was conducted on September 14, 1958 by D. Howard Keiper.

W. Dean Crouse (1924- ), the son of David A. and Ellen Rigby Crouse of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was called to the ministry by the Roxbury congregation on March 25, 1948. Reared in the Evangelical Church, he united with the Church of the Brethren in 1948. He attended Manchester College (1951), Bethany Theological Seminary (B. D., 1954) and did graduate work in group development at Temple University. During 1950-1951, he ministered to the Largo Presbyterian Church in Indiana as a student pastor. He was pastor of the Monroeville Church of the Brethren (1954-1958) before he entered the pastorate of Philadelphia First Church. On March 24, 1946, he was married to Marguerite L. Berkley of Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

First Church developed a series of new ministries while retaining some of the traditional services. In January, 1959, a school of missions



*W. Dean and Marguerite Crouse*

featured Harold Z. Bomberger, Paul Grubb, Jr., John D. Keiper and Philip Grossman, the regional secretary of the Wycliffe Bible Translators. In 1959, Thomas Riethof conducted a series of courses on personal evangelism.

The church conducts Wednesday evening prayer circles for the healing of the sick. "This congregation's faith in the healing ministry of Christ had led them to have a very active ministry among the sick and shut-ins", one of the church's pamphlets advises.

To assist the pastor in making contacts for the church in the new community, Nancy Rosenberger, the daughter of Lester and Pauline Rosenberger, and a member of the congregation, was employed as a parish vistior for the summer of 1959. A bus ministry was also inaugurated to transport children and adults for the Sunday School and church services. The church bus has also been used for youth retreats, interchurch activities and some district functions. When the destructive flood of 1972 struck Pennsylvania, the bus was used to transport workers to the Wilkes-Barre area for rehabilitation work. As the church and Sunday School continued to demonstrate growth, the carriage house to the rear of the church was remodeled to provide extra classroom space and to serve as a youth activity center (1960).

The Daily Vacation Bible School (later called Summer Ministries) employed the church bus to bring pupils to the church. Offerings from these schools have been used for work among the Navajo Indians and other mission projects. The congregation in recent years has supported Joel W. Thompson in Indonesia and Mrs. Fred Wampler in India.

First Church pioneered in the establishment of classes in Christian Education for school children during the week. Beginning in 1962, children began to come one afternoon per week to the church for religious instruction. In its first year, the school numbered forty-five children, thirty of whom were non-Brethren from the community, who met for one hour classes on a day when schools were dismissed.

Kindergarten through grade six were taught, plus a Mothers' Bible Class, taught by the pastor. This interest in outreach to children has continued to be shown through various types of ministries. In recent years, a pre-school for three- and four-year old children meets three mornings each week.

In 1962, a note from the congregation said,

"Our church was one of forty-four churches of the denomination which participated in the Billy Graham Greater Philadelphia Crusade. Prayer meetings were held throughout the summer in the homes of members. This fall a group is studing a Bible course prepared by Billy Graham." <sup>44</sup>

First Church observed its 150th anniversary as a congregation in October, 1963. Guest speakers addressed the congregation on each Sunday of the month. Calvert N. Ellis spoke on "First Church and Its Service To Education"; DeWitt L. Miller, moderator of Annual Conference, spoke on "Whose Church Is This?"; W. Clemens Rosenberger spoke on "The Grave Responsibility of Making History"; and Paul M.

Robinson concluded the observances with a sermon on "A Rock From Which You Came."

The church has a strong lay witness program. Door-to-door evangelism is practiced by pastor and laity alike. An Andrew Society was founded to bring "our brother to Christ." Laymen have been active in the church, often providing essential services, including preaching, in the absence of the pastor. At times, the church has employed assistants to aid in the ministry of visitation evangelism.

In 1964, First Church voted to invite members from the Germantown Church into its fellowship. Members of First Church assisted the district, the brotherhood and the Germantown trustees in planning for the new ministries which developed at the denomination's original church in America.

On March 15, 1964, the church dedicated an electronic carillon which was given to the congregation by Allen G. Beckley as a memorial to his wife, Gladys. Dr. Beckley retired in 1962 as the clinical professor of medicine at Temple University Hospital. Although the carillon weighs only seven and one-half pounds, it has the tonal equivalent of 79,462 pounds of cast bells.



*Philadelphia First Church*

In 1969, the congregation began construction of an addition to the church. This annex, named Good Memorial Hall in honor of J. Omar Good, was dedicated on May 17, 1970. The new building has approximately 4,700 square feet of floor space for a library, crib nursery, nursery, kindergarten, three additional classrooms, a church office and a pastor's study. The total cost of the new building, with alterations to the existing building, was approximately \$168,000.

J. Omar Good (1877-1969) was a native of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. After graduating from Juniata College in 1896, he moved to Philadelphia, where he united with the First Church of the Brethren (1898). He was married to the former Mabel Hartmann, whose family was prominent in the affairs of the congregation.

Bro. Good served as a trustee, church clerk and missionary treasurer for many years in the congregation. His generosity aided to the relocation of First Church and to its building programs. Because of his exceptional liberality, Good Hall, on the campus of Juniata College, was named in his honor. Brother Good directed that after all bequests had been fulfilled, the remainder of his estate was to be used for "the perpetuation of the Historical Triune Faith of Protestant Christianity."

The trustees of the Good estate, Lester and Pauline Rosenberger, of Narbeth, Pennsylvania, decided that his wishes could best be fulfilled by establishing on the campus of Juniata College, The J. Omar Good Visiting Distinguished Professorship of Evangelical Christianity. This independent professorial chair is a fitting memorial to this quiet, unassuming man who, in life, exemplified the kind of Christian spirit he attempted to perpetuate in his will.



*J. Omar Good*

In its new location, the church has conducted ministries to various city-area institutions. The church conducts services on Sunday afternoons at Regina Nursing Center and at Abbey Hall Home for the Aged; its members serve as tutors at the Germantown Ministry; and it provides Christian Education leadership at the United Methodist Church at Sixth and Dauphin Streets.

Small group activities at the church consist of Bible-study, faith-sharing, ceramics, needlework and various areas of support work. There is a strong youth program. First Church's program is kept fluid by the creation of activities to meet current interests and needs and by

phasing out those activities which no longer contribute to the spiritual growth of the congregation.

In the twentieth century, the congregation has not only inaugurated new programs but it has called many men and women into positions of leadership as ministers. Among those called by the congregation are the following:

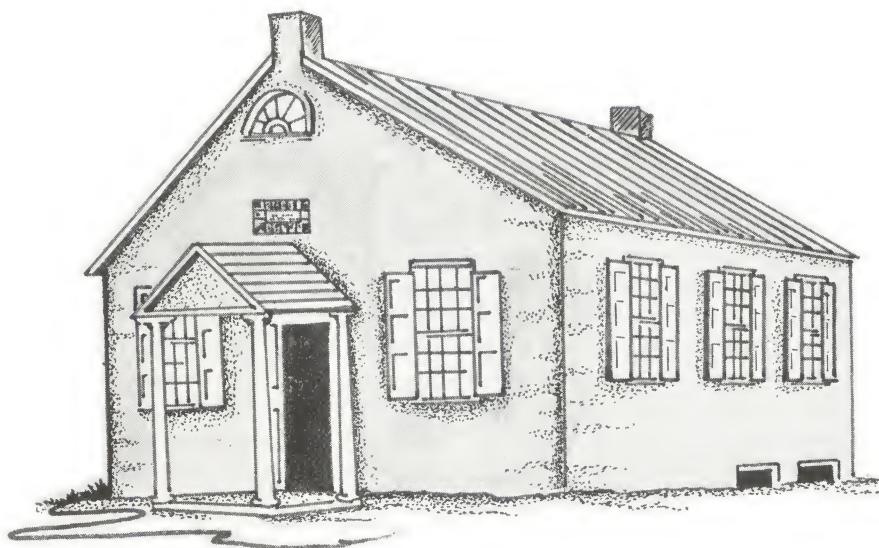
October 4, 1906.--Tobias T. Myers, advanced to the eldership.  
May 20, 1914.--Daniel Webster Kurtz, advanced to the eldership.  
May 20, 1914.--William S. Irwin called to the ministry.  
May 20, 1914.--Henry K. Garman called to the ministry. He was installed into the second degree ministry on May 12, 1915.  
May 20, 1914.--Victor A. Hengst called to the ministry.  
May 24, 1922.--H. Stover Kulp, advanced to the eldership.  
May 28, 1924.--Jacob A. Bricker, advanced to the eldership.  
June 1, 1927.--B. B. Ludwick, advanced to the eldership.  
May 22, 1929.--Jesse D. Reber, advanced to the eldership.  
July 17, 1935.--Florence Fogelsanger Murphy, licensed to preach.  
January 10, 1943.--Henry F. Kulp, licensed to preach. He was ordained to the ministry on November 1, 1943.  
January 23, 1944.--Charles M. Bieber, licensed to the ministry.  
May 11, 1947.--Elmer Q. Gleim, advanced to the eldership.  
1951.--Ferdinand McGrath, licensed to the ministry.  
August 3, 1952.--Henry Eckenrode, licensed to preach. License was renewed on June 10, 1953.  
1956.--W. Clemens Rosenberger, licensed to preach. He was ordained on May 28, 1957 at the Germantown Church.  
May 24, 1959.--John Lengle, licensed to the ministry.  
February 20, 1966.--Patrick Chaffin, licensed to preach. He was re-licensed on August 3, 1969.

Those who have served as elders-in-charge of the congregation are as follows:

1906.--T. T. Myers.  
1907-1913.--Jacob T. Myers.  
1914.--D. W. Kurtz.  
1915.--Jacob T. Myers.  
1916-1920.--C. F. McKee.  
1921-1922.--C. C. Ellis.  
1923-1924.--Ross D. Murphy.  
1924-1935.--Ross D. Murphy, elder. J. A. Bricker, associate elder.  
1936-1945.--Ross D. Murphy.  
1947-1960.--William I. Book.  
1960-1971.--Lester M. Rosenberger.  
1971-1972.--Dayton Kreider.  
1972-1974.--Carl F. Reber.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

## AMBLER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



The original meetinghouse of the Brethren in Upper Dublin Township was erected on the Rose Valley Road about fifteen miles north of Philadelphia. "The little church on the hill" was erected on a site close to the older established communities of Whitemarsh, Chestnut Hill, Germantown and Upper Dublin. John C. Reiff donated land, September 14, 1840, to be used as the site for a meetinghouse and cemetery. In this year, the Brethren constructed a substantial stone meetinghouse for members living in the region north of Philadelphia. It was known as the Upper Dublin German Baptist Church.

For many years the membership in the church remained small. In 1852, for example, twenty persons were identified as having paid either twenty-five cents or fifty cents per month toward the support of the services. The number of contributors increased to forty-five in 1856. Oversight for the new church was invested in John W. Price, John H. Umstad and Jacob Reiner. Others who ministered to the congregation in the nineteenth century included John W. Slingluff, Edwin Kirk, G. D. Price and John Francis.

The *Minute* book of the congregation contains the following interesting records:

"February 27, 1875. Sister Jane Rodgers was paid \$25 per year for tending the meetinghouse. At this same meeting, a discussion was started with respect to 'Secret Societies', which were regarded as

evil. In 1877, the church decided that all members who belong to them should withdraw. They could no longer be held as members of the Church of the Brethren if they continued in such societies."

"February 28, 1885. A vote was taken to collect money at each morning and evening meeting on the Sabbath for the benefit of the pastor. The motion passed."

"September 17, 1887. At a special meeting to determine whether the church should be progressive or conservative, the congregation voted 8 progressive and 1 conservative."

Mission work in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania was comparatively new in 1880. The first Mission Board, consisting of two members, was formed in 1879, with a third member added in 1880.<sup>1</sup> In 1888, a special request appeared before the Board asking for aid to revive the work in Upper Dublin. The District *Minutes* (1889) suggested that the work could not prosper until a resident minister was found. The Mission Board assumed the responsibility for providing preaching services for a number of years. Ministers who preached during these crucial years were Jacob Z. Gotwals (1812-1903), Jacob L. Connor, George Bucher (1845-1923), E. A. Orr and J. B. Brumbaugh, the latter a student at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania.

In 1894, B. F. Kittinger (1841-1913), formerly of the Marsh Creek congregation in Southern Pennsylvania, became the pastor of Upper Dublin. At the turn of the century, he gave this account of some of the services of the congregation:

"Our lovefeast on May 25 was the smallest in attendance for a number of years owing in part to the unfavorable state of the weather. The services, however, were impressive and helpful. Elder W. S. Long of the Philadelphia Church officiated.

"The Sunday School on the 26th was made interesting and instructive by the presence of W. G. Nyce of Royersford, who recalled in our imagination the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. At the 10:30 A. M. service, Bro. Nyce spoke on 'Glory and Power in the Voice of the Lord', using the illustrious example of John the Baptist in a life of trustful obedience. The application was well-received."<sup>2</sup>

B. F. Kittinger served the church from April 15, 1894, until 1906. After this he transferred his membership to Philadelphia First Church and continued to worship in the city congregation until his death on July 31, 1913, at the age of seventy-two years.

The congregation called Seth F. Myers (1842-1923) from Martinsburg, Pennsylvania, to begin his ministry in 1906. At a time when the average American worker was receiving between \$300 and \$500 per year in salary, the Upper Dublin Church paid him the sum of \$300 per year. In 1911, Bro. Myers moved to Altoona, Pennsylvania, to assume a pastorate of the Church of the Brethren.

Jacob M. Boaz (1878-1958), of Souderton, Pennsylvania, led the congregation in a resurgence (1911-1915). He accepted the challenge of the Upper Dublin pastorate at a time when some of its members were

thinking of closing its doors. Brethren were discovering that meeting-houses built beyond villages or towns were often poorly situated to attract new members. *The Brethren Family Almanac* advised in 1905, "If we want to reach the people, we must build our churches where the people can reach them with as little inconvenience as possible."<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the Upper Dublin Church would have closed its doors if it had not been for the support and enthusiasm of two sisters, Anna M. Brunner and Amanda R. Kratz. These were daughters of John Reiff who originally gave the land for the church house. These two sisters



*Anna M. Brunner  
and  
Amanda R. Kratz*

steadfastly believed that the Church of the Brethren had a future in Upper Dublin Township and in the Ambler Borough. In fact, as early as 1912, the congregation considered the purchase of the Methodist Church property in Ambler. Although the church council decided not to buy the property, the membership never lost confidence that the church must relocate in Ambler Borough.<sup>4</sup>

Anna M. Brunner (1844-1935) organized the congregation's first Sisters' Aid Society in November, 1911. She served as the treasurer of the organization until November, 1934, when her failing eyesight forced her to resign. This organization has been an important agent in the church's ministry to the community, welfare programs, Brethren Service and Juniata College. A large share of the credit for the growth of the Upper Dublin congregation must be given the Ladies' Aid Society and Anna M. Brunner.

Amanda R. Kratz (1846-1943) was baptized at the age of fifteen in June, 1861, at the start of the Civil War. She once commented about her experience with the church:

"In 1901, Elder Kittinger asked me to teach a class and I thought I could not do it. But if only two weeks afterward he had asked me to resign, I could not have done it. Teaching brought me such great joy."<sup>5</sup>

Such was her interest in teaching that she began the first of a continuing series of Teacher Training classes. Her interest in writing expressed itself in regular contributions to *The Gospel Messenger*. In 1937, she gave this denominational periodical to each of the twenty-eight members of her Sunday School class as a Christmas gift. On her ninety-second birthday anniversary, she stood before her class and recited from memory thirty-one verses taken from the Book of Proverbs, citing chapter and verse for each. She was blind.

The enthusiasm and energy of these two sisters provided inspiration to the membership at Upper Dublin during the crucial years of the early 1900s.

Jacob M. Boaz concluded his work at Upper Dublin in 1915 and accepted an invitation to minister to the Long Beach Church of California. He continued a very active and productive ministry at a number of California churches during the remainder of his life.



*Henry K. Garman*

Henry K. Garman (1884-1935), who was born at Milton Grove, Pennsylvania, moved to Philadelphia in 1906 after he graduated from Elizabethtown College. He soon won an important position as an employee of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. He was in the city only a short

time before his interest was stirred in mission work. The Philadelphia First Church called him to the ministry on May 20, 1914, and the Upper Dublin congregation invited him to serve as its pastor, beginning in March, 1915. He was advanced to the full ministry on May 15, 1915.

By the time the new pastor arrived, considerable sentiment had formed to relocate the Upper Dublin Church in the Ambler Borough. By this time, most members were no longer living in the immediate vicinity of the meetinghouse. Members realized that the church could grow only if it planted its roots deep in the community. The Ambler community, by the turn of the century, had become a resort town for many Philadelphians.

The years from 1914 to 1920 were difficult years for the church. Twenty-six members were listed on the church rolls in 1914. During World War I, sentiment against people of Germanic background was bitter. In these years, the congregation began to plan for a new kind of ministry to a changing community.

The old stone meetinghouse on Butler Pike was too small for a growing fellowship. The facilities were no longer adequate for Sunday School instruction. Church periodicals of the brotherhood were saying: "the one-room building for Sunday School purposes should quickly disappear." The congregation appointed a church planning committee to study the future of the church's location. Meanwhile, the district recognized the leadership of Bro. Garman by advancing him to the eldership (November 2, 1920).

Ground for the new church building was broken on May 29, 1922. A correspondent to *The Gospel Messenger* announced the exciting event: "We plan on building a new church on the corner of Rosemont and Butler Avenues. This is a big work for us and we trust and pray that God will guide us through it."<sup>18</sup> H. Stover Kulp, pastor of Philadelphia First Church, conducted the cornerstone-laying service on August 20, 1922. As the church took form, it held a commanding position on an elevated lot in the Ambler Borough. The congregation incorporated itself as "The Church of the Brethren, Ambler, Pennsylvania."

The years of Bro. Garman's pastorate (1915-1935) brought many changes to the church's ministry. The church dedicated its new building of Chestnut Hill Stone on June 24, 1923, celebrating an important milestone in its history. The building, forty-eight feet by seventy feet in dimensions, had a large corner tower. The new building, with its sanctuary for 225 persons, cost \$44,000.

The congregation soon became a leader in cooperative community endeavors. In 1927, the church council voted to open the communion to any who professed faith in Christ. This action and others led to the charge that the congregation was liberal. In 1927, the pastor began to practice the dedication of children in services conducted at the home. The first child consecration service in the church was observed on January 15, 1928.

During Bro. Garman's pastorate, the Sunday School was reorganized into classes and a Board of Christian Education was created to promote

the work. Special music programs brightened the church and Sunday School services. This came at a period when many congregations continued to believe that congregational singing alone was adequate in the church's services. To promote the music program of the Ambler Church, Bro. Garman secured Henry G. Gottshall (1903-1946) as the church organist and choir director.

At a Sunday School meeting on November 5, 1926, John K. Snyder offered to organize a Sunday School orchestra. The plan was accepted and the first rehearsal was held on January 28, 1927. This orchestra played for the first time in the Sunday School service on May 28, 1927. The orchestra, with forty members, was a factor in identifying many community residents with the Ambler Church of the Brethren.

The Ambler congregation was fortunate to have many leaders devoted to church music. From 1930 until 1936, Henry G. Gottshall directed music in the Ambler congregation and pioneered in emphasizing the importance of special music in church worship. In 1938, he gathered into a booklet sixteen of his own compositions and published them under the title, "The Joy of Salvation."

During the depression years (1930-1935), the congregation retired its indebtedness. Occasional notes from members about the congregation reflect the concern they had about the mortgage. "The mortgage was reduced to \$3,600 in the past year", said a member in 1928. "Through the different church organizations, Sunday School classes and individuals, we have paid \$1,280 toward the church mortgage in 1929", wrote another.<sup>7</sup> Finally, in 1932, a decade after the building construction started, the total indebtedness was paid. The congregation not only rejoiced in this achievement but paused to honor Anna M. Brunner and Amanda R. Kratz for the encouragement and faith they gave the church during critical financial years.<sup>8</sup>

The church membership grew from thirty-two in 1915 to 180 persons in 1932. Many of the members were attracted from parts of Montgomery, Philadelphia and Bucks counties. The distance these people had to travel made it virtually impossible for them to support both morning and evening services. Consequently, in January, 1929, the church voted to discontinue regular Sunday evening services.

The life of Henry K. Garman came to a sudden and unexpected conclusion on October 20, 1935, while he was officiating at a lovefeast service. Henry G. Gottshall described the dramatic moments:

"Before anyone realized what was taking place, the angel of death touched our pastor, Bro. Henry Garman, whom we thought to be in the prime of life and the picture of health."<sup>9</sup>

A man of unusual vision and profound understanding of the needs of others, he gave to the congregation many of the remarkable qualities it retains till this day. Memorial services for the pastor were held in the church on October 24th, with M. C. Swigart, Irwin S. Hoffer and Silas Shoemaker in charge.

The church dedicated a new Hammond organ to the memory of Bro. Garman at a special service on September 20, 1936. It was an appropri-

ate memorial to one who had contributed so much to its musical ministry. An organ recital was presented by Kenneth A. Hallatt, noted organist of the Philadelphia Baptist Temple. The worship service was conducted by the congregation's new pastor, Paul M. Robinson.

For a period of months following Bro. Garman's death, the church was led by two local ministering brethren, I. S. Hoffer and Silas H. Shoemaker. On June 21, 1936, Bro. Robinson arrived to begin his pastoral duties. The Ministry Commission of the district met with the church on October 11, 1936 to install the new pastor. Brethren H. S. Replogle, Trostle P. Dick, W. G. Nyce, M. C. Swigart and T. L. Fretz participated in the proceedings.

Paul Minnich Robinson (1914- ) completed his work at Princeton Theological Seminary while he served as the part-time pastor at Ambler. When he graduated from the seminary in 1938, the membership voted to retain him as its full-time pastor. The church purchased a parsonage on February 22, 1937, at 323 Fairview Avenue. On June 29, 1938, the pastor married Mary Elizabeth Howe at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where the groom's father performed the ceremony. When Bro. and Sister Robinson returned to the Ambler Church, a reception was held for them by the membership and one of the Sunday School classes presented a friendship quilt to Mrs. Robinson.

Bro. Robinson's ministry attracted many people to the church. A church record of 1938 said, "We had 210 in Sunday School and the largest attendance at any regular church service on record."<sup>10</sup> Youth activities on Friday and Sunday evenings became an integral part of the church's life and the youth department showed creditable growth. As the church became involved in new programs, people responded by attending services in increasing numbers. Bro. Robinson said of this period of the church's life:

"...the loyalty of these people to the Church of the Brethren, and especially to the Ambler Church, was tremendously inspiring to me. We had very few members actually living in Ambler; but in spite of this fact, attendance reached a new high for that period."<sup>11</sup>

The Ambler Church was regarded as one of the liberal churches of the district. The church membership was composed of an unusually high percentage of business and professional people. Although the church population was widely scattered in thirty-four different communities of suburban Philadelphia, the people were united in their loyalty to the Ambler Church. In many ways, the congregation resembled the Philadelphia First Church with which it maintained close ties.

For three and a half years (1936-1939), Bro. Robinson led the people into new outreach ministries. "The stone church at Ambler has become a church with drawing power", said a correspondent. Committees were active in promoting various phases of church life. Mission study classes intensified the church's support of the denomination's mission program. Annual meetings of the boards and commissions were held to discuss problems relating to the Sunday

School and church. The church began to plant its roots more firmly in the life of the community.

Paul M. Robinson's roots in the Church of the Brethren were deep. He was born in Denver, Colorado, where his father, John A. Robinson, ministered as pastor. Baptized at the age of seven in the Pleasant Hill Church of Ohio, he was licensed (1931) and ordained (1933) to the ministry at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Before he left the Ambler charge, he advanced to the eldership (December 14, 1939). Paul M. Robinson accepted a call to minister to the Hagerstown Church in Maryland (1940-1953). On November 9, 1953, he was inaugurated the fourth president of Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, a position he held until October 1, 1975. He served as Moderator of the Church of the Brethren in 1956 and was chairman of the Brethren delegation to the National Council of Churches.

Nevin H. Zuck (1915- ), a former student-pastor of the Lebanon Church of the Brethren (1935-1937) and the Philadelphia Bethany congregation (1937-1940), accepted the call to be pastor of the Ambler Church. He began his ministry in this suburban Philadelphia charge on April 1, 1940. On June 15, 1940, he was married to Leah E. Musser of Mountville, Pennsylvania. Bro. Zuck completed work at the Eastern Baptist Seminary (1936-1939) and Mount Airy Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia (1939-1941), graduating from the latter with a Master of Sacred Theology degree. On April 25, 1941, he was ordained to the eldership by the district. Nevin H. Zuck was called to the ministry by the Harrisburg Church (August, 1933) and was ordained at the Ephrata Church of the Brethren (December 11, 1934).

Like Paul M. Robinson before him, pastor Zuck was reared in a minister's family. He is the son of Abram W. and Verdie Bollinger Hibschen Zuck.

Shortly after he became pastor, the Ambler congregation celebrated its hundredth anniversary. A centennial committee, consisting of I. S. Hoffer, chairman, Paul W. Norris, John Shotzberger, Mrs. Rudolph Jago and Silas H. Shoemaker, planned the commemorative services. George N. Falkenstein, a former Germantown pastor and historian, spoke to a crowded morning audience on the theme, "The Message We Have Received." Silas H. Shoemaker, Nevin H. Zuck, Jean Munkenbeck, John K. Snyder and Hannah Shoemaker participated in an afternoon service at which C. C. Ellis spoke on "The Uplift of the Sanctuary." The youth presented dramatic scenes from the life of the congregation and the denomination at the evening service.

During Bro. Zucks's pastorate (1940-1942), services were well-attended and the interest continued to be high. The guest register in the vestibule showed the names of visitors from many surrounding congregations and states. Bro. Zuck continued a strong youth program and gave counseling to youth as they faced difficult decisions during the years of World War II. The congregation was active in its support of the Brethren Service ministries. Charles Haff received contributions from the church for the support of camps for conscientious objectors. Paul G.

Norris and Marvin La Pradd labored as Civilian Public Service workers at Camp Kane, Pennsylvania. Gilbert Young served in the Mansfield Training Center in Connecticut as a C. P. S. worker.

In 1940-1941, a weekday school for children was conducted at the church. This school was instructed by Mrs. Harold Hutt, Mrs. John K. Snyder, Mrs. Paul Norris, Mrs. I. S. Hoffer and Mrs. Nevin Zuck. Church membership classes and mission study groups became an established feature of the church's teaching ministry. In 1940, Harold Hutt taught young men the peace principles of the denomination at sessions conducted during the Sunday School hour. Elder Irwin S. Hoffer led a teacher training class for the church.

Bro. Zuck concluded his pastorate on July 31, 1942, to accept pastoral responsibilities at the Uniontown Church of the Brethren in Western Pennsylvania (1942-1945). He later succeeded M. Clyde Horst as the pastor of the Elizabethtown Church (1945-1969) and became the pastor of the City Church of the Brethren in Goshen, Indiana (1969- ). He was moderator of the Annual Conference (1962) and was a member of the Church of the Brethren Deputation to the Soviet Union in October, 1963.

The new pastor at Ambler was Luther H. Harshbarger, a recent graduate of Yale Divinity School. He began his work in the community on August 1, 1942. He is the son of Samuel Archie and Anna Elizabeth Casner Harshbarger of McVeytown, Pennsylvania. Bro. Harshbarger is the grandson of Winfield S. Harshbarger, a deacon of the Church of the Brethren of the Spring Run Church during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. Before coming to Ambler, Bro. Harshbarger served the Salem Community Church of Nickerson, Kansas (1937-1939), and the Lordship Community Church, Stratford, Connecticut (1940-1942).

The years Bro. Harshbarger served the congregation (1942-1945) were busy and demanding. His visitation took him over an area approximately seventy-five miles in circumference. He worked in the community on behalf of the church and tried to establish working relationships with the sizeable black community in Upper Dublin Township. During these war years, he counseled a congregation which had nearly 100 people involved in the armed services of the nation. He preached to a congregation of liberal-minded people who held strong conservative ties in the older communities of the Philadelphia area. In order to contact many of the members, the deacons set aside visitation days to go two-by-two to the scattered membership.

The congregation felt the impact and disruption of the war years. The Ladies' Aid Society maintained a busy schedule collecting relief goods and garments for overseas assistance. In 1944, for example, the Society completed more than 200 garments for Greek relief. Several of the Sunday School classes wrote letters and mailed devotional booklets to men and women in the service of their country. During World War II, three young men from the congregation served as conscientious objectors in alternative service ministries. Luther H. Harshbarger became

involved in an unique Fellowship of Historic Peace Churches in the Philadelphia area and spent time in service to the Committee For a Just and Durable Peace, chaired by John Foster Dulles.

Bro. Harshbarger's interest in the peace ideals of the denomination led him into international work. Early in January, 1945, the local *Gospel Messenger* correspondent announced, "Luther Harshbarger sailed last week for England to assist John W. Barwick in aiding prisoners of war."<sup>12</sup> In England Bro. Harshbarger became the Assistant Director of the World's Y. M. C. A. War Prisoners Aid. From 1945 until 1947, he became the Senior Representative of the World's Y. M. C. A. in Belgium and the Netherlands. From 1947 to 1949, he was the Director of the World's Y. M. C. A. Services to Prisoners of War in Germany. He was honored in 1953 by the Federal Republic of Germany with the Officers Cross of Merit.

Bro. Harshbarger's devotion to his religious ideals received extended expression as he served as the Pennsylvania State University chaplain (1954-1962) and professor of Humanities and Religious Studies (1957- ). He has been a Visiting Professor at Yale University (1967) and has directed a new center to study religious and human resources on the Pennsylvania State University campus (1970).<sup>14</sup> This center has related religious and theological education to societal change.

On April 1, 1945, Glen Elvin Norris (1899- ) was elected pastor of the Ambler congregation. The son of Thomas McClellan and Mary Hoover Norris of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, he was reared on a farm along the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River. The District Ministerial Committee installed him into the pastorate on July 14, 1945. He was no stranger to the North Atlantic District. He was baptized at the Quakertown Church (1912) and ordained to the ministry at the Pottstown Church (June 7, 1922). He also ministered as pastor of the Parker Ford congregation (1927-1929) prior to his pastoral mission work at Malmo, Sweden (1929-1934).

Mrs. Norris was the former Lois Anna Detweiler of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. She was born in Johnstown (February 26, 1901), the daughter of Ezra H. and Emma Harrison Detweiler. The Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren licensed her and her brother George L. Detweiler to the ministry in 1922. Following her graduation from Juniata College, Lois married Glen E. Norris (1925). Mrs. Norris served ably with her husband in their various pastorates at home and abroad and has managed a household of four sons.

The Ambler Church was faithful in its support of the Brethren Service program of the brotherhood. Paul Henning accompanied a shipment of cattle to Poland. The congregation paid for a heifer for relief and raised its share of expense for the carload of wheat which the district purchased. On April 7, 1946, Luther H. Harshbarger was present to portray the conditions and needs of European people. The Ladies' Aid Society was active in shipping clothing, shoes and home-made soap for overseas relief. In 1946, the women gave \$860.07 for local needs, relief and missions.

In a period in which scientists were warning of the possibilities of a nuclear holocaust, the Church of the Brethren sponsored peace caravans throughout the nation. Urban Long and Ralph Dull were guests of the Ambler Church in 1950 to participate in the Sunday School and church services. Mrs. Marian Harshbarger visited the church to share in a Mothers' and Daughters' Tea and to speak of the needs of Europe. Nearly every family of the church was represented at this meeting (1949).

The congregation has called the following men to the ministry or to the eldership:

Henry K. Garman. Ordained to the eldership, November 2, 1920.

Irwin S. Hoffer. Ordained to the eldership, July 21, 1939.

Paul M. Robinson. Ordained to the eldership, December 14, 1939.

Carlton L. Myers. Licensed to the ministry, January 29, 1941.

Nevin H. Zuck. Ordained to the eldership, April 25, 1941.

Luther H. Harshbarger. Ordained to the eldership, October 15, 1944.

Silas H. Shoemaker. Granted a permanent license to preach on April 24, 1947.

Philip E. Norris. Licensed to preach, February 13, 1949. Ordained to the ministry, September 6, 1953.

Donald C. Norris. Licensed to preach at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, August 6, 1950. Ordained at Ambler on July 26, 1953.

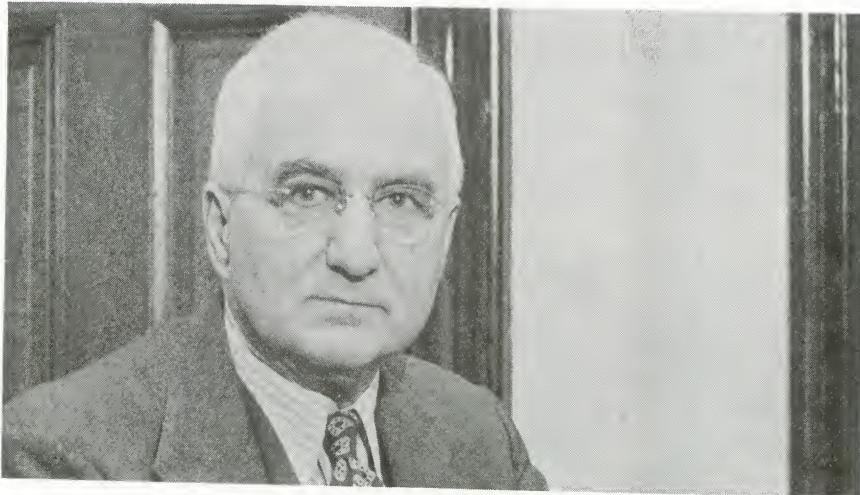
Thomas E. Shoemaker. Licensed to preach, December 30, 1951. Ordained on September 6, 1953.

Stanley L. Davis, Jr. Licensed to preach, June 5, 1955. Ordained June 14, 1964.

James Weaver. Licensed to preach, August 12, 1962. Ordained on December 12, 1965.

During the 1950s, Irwin Seymour Hoffer (1887-1962) provided a stable and discerning leadership as the moderator. He came to the Philadelphia area in 1928 to begin a long teaching career at Temple University. He united with the Germantown congregation but later transferred his membership to the Ambler Church. He was professor of business administration and director of graduate studies in the School of Business at Temple University (1928-1965). Baptized in the Spring Creek Church on January 1, 1903, he was licensed to preach by the Elizabethtown Church on May 6, 1920. From 1910 until 1919, he was instructor of mathematics at Elizabethtown College. On August 26, 1920, he was married to Floy Souder Crouthamel of Elizabethtown.

I. S. Hoffer was an honor student in every college or university he attended. His education took him to Millersville State College (1911), Harvard College (1918), Columbia University (1922) and Harvard Business School (1927). He won distinction in the field of education and the ministry; as a churchman his counsel was much in demand in the North Atlantic District. From 1935 until 1959, when he moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he faithfully served the Ambler congregation as a



*Irwin S. Hoffer*

member and its moderator.

Another leader was Silas Henry Shoemaker (1904- ) who frequently ministered to the congregation as preacher and visitor. He married Edith Marjorie Clark, who was active in Women's Work and served as the church organist from the late 1940s until the early 1960s. Their son, Thomas Everett Shoemaker (1928- ) was one of the first Juniata College graduates to enter Brethren Volunteer Service.

The interests of Glen E. Norris in creative interpretation and writing led him eventually to the task of editing adult publications for the brotherhood (1960-1966). He ministered as pastor at Hanover, Pennsylvania (1953-1959), and at Williamsburg, Pennsylvania (1959-1960), before entering full-time editorial work. He wrote many lessons for the Brethren Adult Quarterly both before and after he worked as curriculum editor. For these services to the brotherhood, he was awarded a special citation presented to him in June, 1967, by the General Board.

From December, 1953, until July, 1954, the Ambler Church was without a pastor. The elder, Irwin S. Hoffer, and visiting ministers, supplied the pulpit. The deacons visited the entire membership prior to the call of Berkey E. Knavel to be pastor of the church. Bro. Knavel came from Myerstown, Pennsylvania, and met with the church in a reception on July 10, 1954. On August 8, 1954, D. Howard Keiper, representing the District Ministerial Commission, installed the new pastor.

Berkey E. Knavel is the son of the historic Shade Creek congregation of Western Pennsylvania. He was licensed to the ministry on November 12, 1940. Prior to the arrival of the Knavels, the congregation renovated the church parsonage on Fairview Avenue.

The church's interest in Brethren Service and missions programs

remained strong. On September 25, 1955, members of the congregation gathered at the farm of Norman Ruth to dedicate two heifers which were purchased for shipment to Germany. Sylvia Bucher entered Brethren Volunteer Service and gave her term of service at the Pilot House in Baltimore, Maryland. When Anita Keeney visited the Sunday School in 1957, the Ambler Church voted to give support to her while she ministered on the Nigerian field.

The community and district ministries remained strong during Bro. Knavel's pastorate (1954-1957). Many organizations of the church and Sunday School participated in numerous district events, sending representatives to district conference, adult fellowship meetings and Christian Education gatherings. In 1956, the pastor delivered the baccalaureate sermon at the Ambler High School graduation. In the fall of the same year, the congregation organized its first Junior Choir. Morning worship services were recorded to be offered to the sick and confined. In 1957, the congregation adopted the commission form of church government.

When Bro. Knavel accepted the pastorate at Roaring Springs, Pennsylvania, the church secured supply ministers. In the interim period (1957-1958), the following persons supplied the pulpit: Everett G. Beckman, Robert A. Byerly, Harold Z. Bomberger, Robert F. Eshelman, A. C. Baugher, Caleb W. Bucher, Galen C. Kilhefner, W. Wayne Glick and Calvert N. Ellis. On May 10, 1958, the congregation honored Irwin and Floy Hoffer for their long and faithful services to the church and presented a set of *Interpreter's Bible* to them.

The new pastor, Donald Leslie Kline (1924- ), came from Lincoln, Nebraska. He was native to the state of Indiana but spent much of his time in formal education in New England and in the Midwest. He was a graduate of Bethany Biblical Seminary (1953), Hartford Theological Seminary (1953-1955), the University of Nebraska (1955-1957) and the Cotner School of Religion (1957-1958). He preached his first sermon in the Ambler Church on August 31, 1958. He ministered to the church for two years (1958-1960) before returning to the Midwest.

For a brief period of time, Earl H. Kurtz and Roy E. McAuley, both from Elizabethtown College, supplied the Ambler pulpit. The church in council decided to call Donald Wayne Rummel (1928- ) from his position as Associate Minister of the Palmyra Church of the Brethren (1957-1960). He was installed as pastor of the Ambler Church on October 16, 1960. For the next decade the church showed numerical and spiritual growth under Bro. Rummel's leadership.

Shortly after Bro. Rummel arrived, the congregation dedicated its new parsonage at 353 Heckler Avenue. W. Dean Crouse, pastor of the Philadelphia First Church, was the guest speaker for the event.

The year 1963 was the seventy-fifth year of the renewal of the work in the Upper Dublin Church. The church recalled its new beginnings in 1888 when the District Mission Board revived the work. The Kopenhaver family presented an identification marker to the church in memory of Mabel K. Kopenhaver. In this year, the congregation

authorized Arthur Dean, the brotherhood architect, to prepare plans for an educational wing.

Irwin S. Hoffer was elected moderator-emeritus of the church in 1961 and Walter W. Eshelman (1908-1969) became the new moderator. A member of the Ambler congregation, Bro. Eshelman was the supervising principal of the Upper Dublin Township Schools. In 1960, he served as president of the National Education Association. He was also one of eight educators who sat on the Advisory Board of the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs (1965-1969). Bro. Eshelman was also the last moderator of the North Atlantic District and was helpful in effecting the merger between the North Atlantic District and the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Under the leadership of its pastor, the church became involved in many new experiences. A Daily Vacation Bible School was conducted in 1961. A school of religious freedoms, a home and family life institute and recognition Sundays for the church's Golden Age members were part of the program for 1962. The Golden Age members ranged in age from eighty to ninety-one years. In 1963, the oldest member in attendance at the church was Mrs. William Layman, who was ninety years of age.

Donald W. Rummel was active in the interests of the district and region. Remembering his own experiences at New Windsor as a Brethren Volunteer worker (1947), he brought fifteen young people from the Brethren Service Center to spend a weekend in Ambler in 1962. In 1964, he returned to New Windsor to serve as one of the leaders for a Brethren Volunteer training unit. He was elected moderator of the North Atlantic District (1967) and, from 1965 until 1970, contributed frequently to the Church of the Brethren periodical, *Leader*.

One of the unique days in the life of the Ambler congregation occurred on June 7, 1964. Mr. Andy Suzuki, a Japanese member of the church, was married to Eeva Hyyti of Finland during the Sunday morning service. Friends from many nationalities met at the church to celebrate the occasion. "A total of 216 persons representing three races, five countries, four religions and many denominations, were in attendance", according to Pastor Rummel. Many members of the church joined in helping to make the occasion memorable.

The years from 1960 to 1969 were times of growth. The church membership increased from 222 to 272. An indication of the congregation's enthusiasm and confidence was expressed in a council *Minute* of October, 1964: "The Ambler Church of the Brethren, in fulfilling its ultimate service to God, recognizes the desirability of the expansion of the physical facilities of the church." A building fund was initiated to make a new educational wing a reality.

The church planning committee, appointed in 1965, projected the design for an enlarged structure. Robert Shelly served as chairman of the committee. The church constructed a new parking lot in 1966 at a cost of \$8,350. Building plans were approved and ground-breaking services were held on April 16, 1967. Paul M. Robinson spoke at the dedication

services on May 12, 1968 as the membership gathered in its new \$270,000 educational unit.



*Ambler Church of the Brethren*

With an enlarged structure, the congregation searched for ways to make a total use of it. The Wee Wonder Nursery was begun in 1969 for children of all races, nationalities, creeds and economic status. It was intended that the school should provide a Christian atmosphere but be nonsectarian in its teachings. The Head Start unit of the community also made use of the facilities. The congregation adopted these programs to meet the changing needs of its community.

The decade of the sixties witnessed significant changes in the church's ministry. Like some other congregations of the brotherhood, the Ambler Church attracted people from all walks of life, including professional, factory, farming and sales people. This mixture of classes of workers gave the church its strength.

Donald Wayne Rummel concluded his services to the congregation in 1970. Licensed to the ministry in the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Illinois (1952), he was ordained at the Freeport, Illinois, Church (1956). At the time he was ordained he was completing his last year of study at Bethany Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. He met Helen Mae Rumsey in Elgin, Illinois, and they were married on August 25, 1951. When the Palmyra Church of the Brethren needed a full-time pastor, the congregation called their former associate minister to return to the church (1970- ).



*Jay E. Gibble and Verda*

The Ambler Church called Jay E. Gibble (1931- ) from a pastorate at the Twenty-Eighth Street Church in Altoona, Pennsylvania. The son of Emmert G. and Elva Brandt Gibble, he was born in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. He was baptized at the Conewago congregation (1940) and was licensed (1952) and ordained (1954) in the Little Swatara congregation of the Eastern District. Jay had experience as a youth minister in the Pasadena Church, California (1959-1961), and served as pastor of the Eel River Church, Indiana (1961-1964), and the Twenty-Eighth Street Church of Altoona (1964-1970). At his graduation from Bethany Theological Seminary, he married Verda Claire Faw, the daughter of Bro. and Sister Chalmer E. Faw (1959).

In June, 1972, when the destructive storm Agnes struck the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, the Ambler Church became involved in a ministry of rehabilitation. At least fourteen persons from the church contributed time in the Wilkes-Barre area to help restore homes lost during the flooding. Five families of the congregation opened their homes to children of the upstate community until their families could be properly housed.

The Ambler Church has become a warm, caring community of believers. The worship services have become less formal and include opportunities for sharing personal and group concerns. Small groups are gaining in importance in the church's total life. In many ways, the congregation has shown its willingness to experiment with new ministries and programs, enlisting the support of the membership in secretarial help for the church office and janitorial services for the buildings. The church seeks to enlist the time of people as part of their stewardship commitment.

In the years since the Ambler Church has been recognized as a con-

gregation, the following brethren have ministered as elders and moderators:

- 1881-1885. Israel Poulson, Jr.
- 1886-1888. Jacob Z. Gottwals.
- 1889-1891. Jacob L. Conner.
- 1891-1893. George Bucher.
- 1893-1895. H. E. Light.
- 1895-1900. S. R. Zug.
- 1901-1902. A. L. Grater.
- 1902-1913. Jesse C. Ziegler.
- 1913-1921. Milton C. Swigart.
- 1922-1935. Henry K. Garman.
- 1936-1939. Trostle P. Dick.
- 1940-1950. Irwin S. Hoffer.
- 1951-1953. Glen E. Norris.
- 1954-1960. Irwin S. Hoffer.
- 1961-1969. Walter W. Eshelman.
- 1970-1974. James Replogle.
- 1974- Mark Waltz.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## PARKER FORD CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



William Brower, a descendant of the Urners, related that the Parker Ford Church of the Brethren had its beginnings at the initiative of four women who were living in the area of Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Three of these church members lived on the Parker Ford side of the Schuylkill River and the other, Catherine March (d. 1848), lived on the east side of the river. Mary Hummel Parker, her daughter Mary Wilson and Mary Rinehart Shantz were active in the Parker Ford (Lawrenceville) area in promoting preaching appointments.

As early as 1808, preaching appointments were conducted on a monthly and a bimonthly schedule at the Parker Ford school and at the Davis' school east of the Schuylkill River. The pioneer preacher was Elder John Price (1751-1829) of the Indian Creek congregation. He was later assisted by his son, Isaac Price (1802-1884) and by John Umstad. James Quinter kept preaching appointments at these locations and held a successful revival at Lawrenceville. Sara Righter Major also led evangelistic services in the community.

The land for the first meetinghouse was purchased from David T. Custer for the sum of \$110 and was entrusted to Jacob Frick, Peter Hollowbush and Isaac Kolb, church trustees. The deed for the land was dated September 16, 1843 but was not recorded at the Chester County courthouse until April 10, 1845. The first church house was constructed on the land by Daniel Seypes and Conrad Longacre and was dedicated on September 24, 1843. The meetinghouse was constructed on the edge of Parker Ford on the Bethel Church Road at the southeastern portion of the community. During the early years of the building's existence, the basement was used for living quarters.

The first Sunday School was organized at Parker Ford on April 14, 1878. David G. Wells was the first superintendent of the school which met on Sunday afternoons. By 1912, the Sunday School had become a strong, active arm of the church. Early superintendents of the school were David G. Wells, Isaac U. Brower, William Brower and John B. Reiff, who became superintendent in 1888.

For many years the Parker Ford Church was an auxiliary of the Coventry Church. Pastoral services were provided by the Coventry ministers and the Parker Ford membership attended the church business meetings and lovefeasts at Coventry. On May 15, 1886, the first communion service was observed at the Parker Ford Church.

Jesse P. Hetric moved into the Parker Ford area in June, 1882. In the fall of this year he began his pastoral work at the Coventry Church of the Brethren (1882-1898). During these years, he also preached to the Parker Ford membership and presided as the elder-in-charge. The preaching of Bro. Hetric had an evangelistic zeal which resulted in numerous conversions. When his ministry to the Coventry Church ceased he continued to be active in the Parker Ford congregation.

Bro. Hetric (1843-1927) was the son of John and Catherine Hetric. He was baptized in the Red Bank Church of the Brethren in Western Pennsylvania on September 5, 1864. Elected to the ministry by his home congregation (June, 1865), he ministered as pastor to the Red Bank Church (1870-1874) and the Philadelphia First Church (1874-1882). From 1882 until his death on September 30, 1927, he served at various times as the elder of the Parker Ford Church. Bro. Hetric was buried in the Urner Cemetery not far from the Coventry Church of the Brethren.

When the congregation voted to inaugurate preaching services each Sunday, it called Frank Ferry Holsopple (1866-1946) from Amwell, New Jersey, to minister, beginning in October, 1895. Bro. Holsopple was a native of Western Pennsylvania, the son of Joseph and Catherine Lehman Holsopple. The new pastor was married to Grace Quinter (1892), a daughter of James Quinter. Bro. Holsopple ministered to the congregation for the next six years (1895-1901). From this pastorate he moved to Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, to become the head of the English Department at Juniata College (1901-1914).

By mutual agreement between the two congregations, Parker Ford was separated from Coventry in 1896. The congregation was granted the right to conduct its own quarterly business meetings and to hold its

own treasury. On July 23, 1898, the Coventry congregation formally acknowledged the independence of the Parker Ford Church.

From 1901 until 1904, Jacob T. Myers cared for the pastoral needs of the membership. Bro. Myers was ministering at the Green Tree congregation during the same period. After W. G. Nyce was ordained to the ministry, he supplied the pulpit frequently.

The earliest records of the church indicate that the Sunday School and church maintained a keen interest in missions and benevolent work. From the time the brotherhood began its mission work in India and China, the Parker Ford Church contributed to the support of this witness. A record also shows that when the disastrous earthquake struck San Francisco in 1906, the membership contributed to the relief of the city.

T. Rodney Coffman (1873-1944) succeeded Bro. Myers as pastor of the church. His ministry in the community began on April 3, 1904. A native of Washington County, Maryland, he was the son of Samuel and Susan Coffman. In the year following his baptism (1896) he was called to the ministry by the Manor congregation. He was married to Blanche E. Fahrney on November 4, 1896. Prior to his ministry in the Schuylkill Valley, he ministered to the Tyrone Church of the Brethren (1895-1904).

When Bro. Coffman began his ministry, the membership of the congregation was less than a hundred. During his pastorate (1904-1912), the church organized a Christian Workers' Society, which became the service branch of the congregation. The new organization promoted study groups, raised funds for church work and promoted the mission cause for the brotherhood. Under Bro. Coffman's leadership, many Sunday evenings were devoted to the study of the Bible and Jewish history.

T. R. Coffman, himself an avid reader, developed an extensive library of resource materials. He encouraged the membership to attend teacher-training classes in order to prepare themselves educationally for Christian work. A report for 1912 notes,

"The graduating exercises of our teacher-training class were held on November 10th. There were twelve graduates. Eight members of the class read essays on different subjects discussed in the course. After an address by Charles Hunter, the teacher, Elder T. R. Coffman, presented the diplomas."<sup>2</sup>

The Parker Ford Church approved the movement to locate the Annual Conference at an established location in the Eastern Region. In 1912, the congregation sent a paper to the district conference, asking the district to approve the securing of "a single place for holding Annual Conference when said Conference falls into the Eastern division."<sup>3</sup>

Under the leadership of Bro. Coffman the church evidenced growth. An active Sunday School and fine pastoral leadership contributed to this growth. For his faithful services to the congregation and the district, Bro. Coffman was advanced to the eldership at a service conduct-

ed by Elders J. T. Myers and J. P. Hetric (December 10, 1911). "Bro. Coffman was the first elder ever ordained at this place", one record stated.<sup>4</sup>

T. R. Coffman accepted the pastorate of the Pittsburgh Church of the Brethren in 1912. Jacob T. Myers (1851-1915), who was living in the Oaks community on a small farm, assumed the pastoral duties of the Parker Ford congregation. He found great delight in returning to the active pastorate in an area he knew so well. He was pleased to write,

"So we are now in the pastorate again, living in the beautiful village of Parker Ford and are a co-worker with Elder J. P. Hetric, who was our pastor of the Philadelphia Church for some years."<sup>5</sup>

Bro. Myers ministered to the congregation where his father-in-law, James Quinter, ministered in earlier years. The congregation appreciated the ministry of Bro. Myers and his wife, the former Lydia Belle Quinter. The members installed electricity in the parsonage and church building in 1913. The work of the pastor to the community was both energetic and appealing, drawing people of all classes to him for assistance. His judgments were sound and his wise counsel brought harmony into the church's life. "There never was any exception to his decision on the many difficult questions of vital importance."<sup>6</sup>

The failing health of Bro. Myers frequently kept him out of the pulpit. During this period, the preaching ministry was shared by Jacob L. Conner (1834-1924) of Graterford, Pennsylvania, and by Jesse P. Hetric. Afflicted with a gangrenous leg, Jacob T. Myers died on October 1, 1915. He had been associated for nearly forty-five years with the churches of the North Atlantic District and was finally laid to rest in the Green Tree Church Cemetery.

Early in January, 1916, Andrew Martin Dixon (1890- ) moved from Middle Pennsylvania to assume the pastoral work of Parker Ford. A native of Brooklyn, New York, he attended Elizabethtown College, Juniata College (1913), Bethany Bible School (1915), Ursinus College A.B., 1917) and the University of Pennsylvania. He was married to Elizabeth Kline, daughter of John H. and Elizabeth Becker Kline of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, on July 21, 1915. The Dixons were active in the Parker Ford community for eleven years (1916-1926).

The congregation benefitted from the wisdom and experience of J. P. Hetric, who was associated with the congregation for nearly thirty-six years, and from the youthful vigor of their new pastor, A correspondent said of Bro. Dixon and his wife:

"He is much esteemed and loved by the people of the community as well as by the membership of the church. Sister Dixon, as teacher of the Women's Bible Class and as chorister of the Sunday School and church, has endeared herself to all who come in touch with her."<sup>7</sup>

On September 22, 1916, John Ellis (1821-1916), "the Bard of Coventry", died. He was the oldest member of the Parker Ford Church, an inventor of some local reputation and a writer of poetry. He made his home with his son-in-law and daughter, J. P. Hetric and Sister K. B. Hetric. Bro. Dixon conducted memorial services for him at the church.

The church attracted many summer visitors. Vacationers, who came from the city areas to spend part of the summer in Parker Ford, found the services inviting. A correspondent observed, "They love to attend our services and many are impressed with the simplicity of our worship services and appearance."<sup>8</sup>

In 1917, with the rising cost of living affecting the nation, there was not a dissenting vote when the council voted for an increase in the pastor's salary. In 1918, the membership assisted the pastor with the purchase of an automobile to help him in his visitation.

A service at the Parker Ford Church soon became a tradition. "For the first time in the history of our church, a six o'clock service" was conducted on Christmas morning in the year 1919. "At five o'clock in the morning, five of the young people went singing throughout the village. Different people brought fruit and six baskets were filled for the sick and the poor."<sup>9</sup> Each year this custom was continued with increasing support.

The congregation's outreach to the community and the world had also grown. Pastor Dixon was a teacher in the Spring City High School for several years during his pastorate. His skill as a leader and teacher was noted throughout the community because of his contacts with youth. The mission program of the church prospered. Birthday offerings were collected regularly during the Sunday School hour for the support of missions. A Christmas Offering of \$300 in 1923 was contributed to the support of the Italian Church in Brooklyn. In 1924, the church erected eleven Scriptural signs along the community highways. In the same year, the church and community cooperated in contributing more than 300 garments to the World-Wide Needle Guild.

During his pastorate at Parker Ford, Bro. Dixon assisted the congregation in constructing a baptistry in the church. Prior to the construction of the inside pool, the church used such locations as the Schuylkill Canal and Pigeon Creek, the Royersford and Coventry baptistries.

When Bro. Dixon accepted the call to become pastor of the Hagers-town Church of the Brethren, the membership met in a farewell service for him and Mrs. Dixon (October 11, 1926). For a period of time, the church was without a pastor. Wilfred N. Staufer, a young man of the congregation, was called to the ministry in 1926. He preached for the membership until Glen E. Norris arrived in April, 1927.

Glen E. Norris (1899- ) and his wife, Lois Anna Detweiler (1901- ), were preparing for overseas mission work at the time of their arrival in Parker Ford. The Norrises ministered to the congregation until the General Mission Board assigned them to the work in Sweden (1927-1929).

The first Vacation Bible School in the community was a joint effort between the Church of the Brethren and a neighboring Baptist Church. Mrs. Norris conducted this school in the summer of 1927. The school had a total enrollment of eighty-two and an average attendance of sixty-three pupils.

In the spring of 1928, the church prepared the basement of the church building for use by Sunday School classes. Partitions were installed to form three medium-sized class rooms and one large area for use by the Primary Department. The church structure had been remodeled on several occasions earlier. In 1889, the church was remodeled at a cost of \$1,200. In 1926, the church auditorium was completely redecorated and rededicated. H. Stover Kulp was the guest speaker in 1926.

The Parker Ford Church was one of four congregations of the Church of the Brethren which met in regular Sunday School conventions. It cooperated with the Pottstown, Harmonyville and Coventry churches in improving its Sunday School ministries. In 1927, the convention selected a committee to prepare lesson supplements for the study of the Gospel of Mark. In 1928, Glen E. Norris prepared a series of six lessons on New Testament evangelism. On April 14, 1928, the Parker Ford Sunday School observed its fiftieth anniversary. Of special interest was the fact that J. B. Reiff had served the school for thirty-eight years as superintendent.

In 1929, A. M. Dixon returned to Parker Ford to minister as the pastor (1929-1936). In spite of the adverse economic conditions of the nation, the outlook of the church was hopeful:

"The year 1930 was one of great blessing in this church. In view of the conditions of need both temporal and spiritual, the church had made use of her opportunity as never before. The Sunday School is increasing in numbers and interest."<sup>10</sup>

On December 1, 1931, the women of the Parker Ford Church met in a full-day planning conference at the church. Aware of the mounting economic needs within the community, they devised strategies to meet the problems of the approaching winter of unemployment. "A church chest has been provided which will be used to place clothing and foodstuffs to be distributed throughout the winter as the needs of the community are presented."<sup>11</sup>

When Bro. Dixon resigned the work at Parker Ford in 1936, Wilfred Noble Staufer (1906-1962) and his wife, Esther Harley Staufer, worked with the congregation from May to October, 1936. Bro. Staufer traced his ancestry to Christopher Saur. The line of descent is as follows: Christopher Saur, Sr. (1693), Christopher Saur, Jr. (1721), David Saur, Sr. (1764), Mary Saur Frick (1787), Angeline Frick Ellis (1817), Jennie Ellis Staufer (1848), Frank Ellis Staufer (1882), and Wilfred Noble Staufer. The oldest son of Wilfred and Esther Harley Staufer is Wilfred Bryan Staufer, born in 1936.

Clayton Hurst Gehman (1909- ) accepted the pastoral duties of the church on October 1, 1936. Bro. Gehman was born in East Earl Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the son of Samuel Sensenig and Lydia Weaver Hurst Gehman. Formerly a member of the Mennonite church, he united with the Church of the Brethren at the Mohler's congregation, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in June, 1928. He was licensed to the ministry at a Ministerial Association meeting in the

chapel of Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Illinois (May, 1931). On June 16, 1928, he was married to Mary Z. Gibble, a member of the Chiques congregation of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Bro. Gehman ministered to the Parker Ford Church from October, 1936, until June 5, 1944. During his ministry, he attended the Eastern Baptist College (1938-1941) and the Eastern Baptist Seminary (1941-1944). On July 7, 1938, Trostle P. Dick and H. S. Replogle met with the church to install Bro. Gehman into the eldership.

The church was active in community and district affairs. It continued its community Vacation Bible School programs. It hosted district conventions and ministerial meetings. A community leadership school in 1940 brought most of the community churches into meetings in the Parker Ford Church. In March, 1943, a Women's Christian Temperance Union convention met in the church.

Several young men of the congregation registered for Civilian Public Service work during World War II. Howard E. Hiltebeitel, of Spring City, and Clarence E. Quay, Jr., of Parker Ford, were in Camp Lyndhurst, Virginia, as workers. The congregation prepared special packets of goods for them while they were in the service. Donald M. Snider, the Regional Director of Brethren Service work, visited the church in 1942 to explain the Civilian Public Service program.

In the summer of 1944, Stephen G. Margush (1912- ) served as the pastor. Bro. Margush was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, the son of George and Anna Zazola Margush. He was baptized (1934), licensed (1939) and ordained (1940) to the Christian ministry in the Quakertown Church of the Brethren. On August 17, 1940, he was married to Anna M. Rotenberger of Quakertown, Pennsylvania. Bro. Margush supplied the Parker Ford pulpit from June to September, 1944.

On Easter Sunday, 1944, the church called Alvin Slotter Alderfer (1900- ) to minister to the congregation. He was installed as pastor on October 29, 1944, in a service conducted by Irwin S. Hoffer. Bro. Alderfer was native to the North Atlantic District and ministered previously as pastor of the Norristown Church of the Brethren (1939-1944). For the next twenty-four years (1944-1968), Bro. Alderfer served the Parker Ford congregation.

The members of the church were active in their support of the brotherhood relief ministries during World War II. Harvest Home services produced fruits and vegetables for overseas relief shipments. The church contributed \$372.65 for its share of the district wheat project (1945). In 1947, the church shipped 1,190 cans of food to New Windsor, Maryland, for relief. In 1948, the Sunday School purchased a tractor for mission work in India. The church and Sunday School combined to send four heifers overseas for the rehabilitation of farms in Europe.

The congregation has given support to Edward and Helen Angeny on the China mission field. It has also given supplementary support for Marie Rupel on the Nigerian mission field. In 1961, the members,

through the church and Sunday School, decided to support Robert Lenker, a mission worker in Quito, Ecuador.

One of the congregation's early pastors was returned to the church for memorial services in February, 1946. Elder F. F. Holsopple, who retired from the active ministry in 1934, died on February 16, 1946. Memorial services were conducted at the church by pastor A. S. Alderfer, Ross D. Murphy and W. G. Nyce. Bro. Holsopple's children, Frances Q. H. Parsons, Naomi Q. H. Adams, Quinter Holsopple, Herman L. Holsopple and Mary Catharine Amile, attended the services.

When Bro. Alderfer began his ministry at the church, one of his early dreams was of a functional and attractive church for the worshipping community. In 1947, the church was painted and remodeled by installing memorial windows and indirect lighting. C. C. Ellis, of Juniata College, was the guest speaker on the day of dedication (May 25, 1947). Complete plans for remodeling the entire building were drawn and, on December 10, 1950, a six-room addition to the church was dedicated.

Early in May, 1950, the old church vestibule was removed with the assistance of many of the members and a new bell tower was constructed. Men and women of the church labored, often late into the evening hours, making major improvements on the building. No contractor was employed for the work but the entire project was under the supervision of Russell Prizer, J. Earl Pennypacker, Augustus Malenke, Jr., and Alvin S. Alderfer. Pastor Alderfer's dream became a reality when lavatories, Sunday School rooms and a nursery were completed. An amplifying system was installed to play recordings for the surrounding



*Parker Ford Church of the Brethren*

community.

On the day of dedication, a homecoming spirit was evident. Former pastors and friends of the church celebrated the improvements. Guests from the Pottstown, Coventry, Harmonyville, Green Tree, Royersford, Mingo and Norristown congregations were present for an occasion which was "one of the biggest in the history of the church."<sup>12</sup> The offerings of the services for the afternoon and evening of December 10, 1950, were given to the Amwell Church, whose building had been partially destroyed by fire.

Families who have been active in the life of the congregation are memorialized in the windows of the church. Among those who are listed are the following: George and Rhoda Allen, I. U. and Mary A. Brower, Enos S. and Elizabeth J. Fryer, Irma and William Fox, Lois Hetric, the Hiltabetel family, Violet and Frank Kugler, Bruce A. Malenke, the A. E. Mauger family, the Pennypacker family, Adah E. and John B. Reiff, Henry and Anna M. Rice, the Shanaman family and Calvin F. Staufer.

Further improvements were made to the church building in 1953 with the placing of new carpet and new pews in the sanctuary. On October 14, 1956, a new organ was dedicated with special services. The guest organist for the day was William F. Lamb, Jr., and Frederick Malene. Morley J. Mays, dean of Juniata College, was the guest speaker for both services on this day.

On January 19, 1960, thirteen persons dedicated themselves to a ministry of visitation and personal concern for the membership and community. This undershepherd plan has been continued by the church.

The church uses a plot of approximately three acres of land for parking, recreation and fellowship occasions. A fellowship building of cement blocks was constructed in 1961 south of the church. These outdoor facilities are used frequently by the church and community for summer recreation programs, picnics, Daily Vacation Bible Schools and community game nights.

The Parker Ford Church honored its pastor, Alvis S. Alderfer, with a special "This Is Your Life" presentation, in 1965. Called to the ministry at the Harmonyville Church of the Brethren on November 1, 1939, he had ministered as pastor of the congregation at Parker Ford for twenty-one years, was secretary to the District Mission Board since 1942, was a public school teacher since 1932 and the chaplain to the Pennsylvania State Association for Safety Education.

The church celebrated its 125th anniversary on October 27, 1968. In preparation for the occasion, a pictorial directory of the membership was published. During the 1960s, the congregation achieved a peak membership of 179 persons.

The Parker Ford Church maintains a keen awareness of its history. The remodeled church house contains a vestibule with a small museum case of artifacts from earlier times. Here are to be found metal hinges and pins from the old carriage sheds which once stood on the church

grounds; early communion coffee cups used by members; and special certificates of recognition from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acknowledging the humanitarian contributions of the church during the disastrous flood in 1972. Close to the vestibule is a classroom which contains a picture of James Quinter, whose memory is perpetuated by the class which bears his name.

Alvin S. Alderfer resigned his work after twenty-four years of service to the congregation (October 31, 1969). He was succeeded by Robert M. Latshaw (1928- ), a member of the congregation who came from a Lutheran background. With his brother, the pastor manages a hardware store in Spring City. Bro. Latshaw was born in Spring City, Pennsylvania, the son of Clayton T. and Margaretta Winner Latshaw. He is married to Rose Ella Kugler. Robert M. Latshaw was baptized (1958), licensed (1965) and ordained (October 20, 1968) to the ministry in the Parker Ford congregation. Bro. Latshaw was installed as pastor of the Parker Ford Church by Joseph M. Long on April 27, 1969.



Robert M. Latshaw

The congregation has called the following persons to the ministry or eldership:

January 6, 1900. W. G. Nyce, ordained to the ministry.

December 10, 1911. T. Rodney Coffman, advanced to eldership.

October 9, 1926. Wilfred N. Staufer, elected to the ministry.

Ordained to ministry on April 6, 1930.

July 7, 1938, Clayton H. Gehman, advanced to eldership.

May 19, 1946. Richard K. Dixon, licensed to the ministry.

January 23, 1949. Gerald F. O'Donnell, licensed to the ministry.  
Ordained on November 12, 1950.  
August 10, 1952. Clarence Quay, Jr., licensed to the ministry.  
October 27, 1963. Paul Henry List, licensed to the ministry.  
December 12, 1965. Robert L. Latshaw, licensed to the ministry.  
Ordained, October 20, 1968.

The following persons have administered the affairs of the church as moderators:

1911-1918.--Jesse P. Hetric.  
1919-1922.--Andrew M. Dixon.  
1923-1926.--Jesse P. Hetric  
1927.--Andrew M. Dixon.  
1928.--Jesse P. Hetric.  
1929.--Glen E. Norris.  
1930-1936.--Andrew M. Dixon.  
1937-1939.--Trostle P. Dick.  
1940-1944.--Clayton H. Gehman.  
1945-1968.--Alvin S. Alderfer.  
1969-1971.--John R. Malenke.  
1972.--Robert M. Latshaw.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### HARMONYVILLE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

The Harmonyville Church of the Brethren is located in northern Chester County in a section once known as Nantmeal Country. Here early Welsh settlers, once interested in establishing their own distinct communities, took up lands west of the Schuylkill River. Like other national groups, they named their localities after their native communities. Nantmeal was named for a community in Radnorshire, Wales. In time, the Welsh blended with the Scotch-Irish, English and Germans who entered the region.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Nantmeal Township was noted for a Seventh Day Baptist settlement. The French Creek Seventh Day Baptist Cemetery east of Knauertown is a reminder of the influence of these people in the area. The movement was founded in 1726 by Philip Davis, Lewis Williams, Richard Edwards, Griffith Griffiths and William Jones.

George Price (1753-1823) owned land in Nantmeal Township as early as 1773. He conducted a mission in the name of the Brethren in this area as early as 1774. Even after Bro. Price moved into Coventry Township (1794), he continued to conduct a mission at Nantmeal. In 1810, he became the elder-in-charge of the Coventry congregation, serving both the Coventry Church and the Nantmeal mission until his death. Afterward, the Green Tree congregation conducted a work at Nantmeal, continuing until 1880, at which time the mission was closed.<sup>1</sup>

In 1845, David Keim pioneered in farming in northern Chester County, settling in Warwick Township. This new section had been formed from East Nantmeal Township and derived its name from Warwick Furnace where the famous Benjamin Franklin stoves were made. David Keim (1802-1897), the founder of the Harmonyville Church of the Brethren, was a descendant of Johannes Keim who came to America in 1698 from Germany. When Johannes Keim's wife died, he returned to Germany where he married a second time (1706). He returned to Philadelphia soon afterward and secured land near Pottstown in a section known as Oley.

From Johannes Keim came descendants who promoted the work of the church at Harmonyville. Johannes Keim II (b. 1711) moved to Warwick Township, married and had a son named Johannes Keim III (b. 1732). Johannes III was the father of George Keim who married Catherine Shenkel of Harmonyville (1774). The oldest of their sons was Jacob Keim, who married Hannah Switzler (1796). Jacob and Hannah's eldest son was David Keim, the founder of the Harmonyville congregation. David Keim's brother, Samuel, lived on the old Keim homestead and gave the deed for the land on which the Harmonyville Church is built.

The earliest preaching services for the church were conducted in a schoolhouse which had been erected in the township in 1802. William

G. Nyce once wrote about the church's founder:

"In 1845, Elder David Keim, from the Coventry district, moved to the Harmonyville area and built a log house on a hill north of Knauertown. He had previously been one of the many preachers who came on horseback from Coventry to preach in the neighborhood. He now assumed charge of the little group of Brethren already there and, in the years that followed, built up a good-sized congregation."<sup>3</sup>

Meetings were held for an entire generation in the village schoolhouse. The ministers who came on horseback included Peter Hollowbush, Jacob L. Conner, Jesse P. Hetric, John Y. Eisenberg, Ira C. Holsopple and J. J. Shaffer. A thriving Sunday School dated from 1859 when the Brethren and the Methodists conducted a Union Sunday School in the schoolhouse. The earliest references in the Harmonyville Sunday School records date to 1869. For many years, Jonathan Keim, son of Samuel Keim, was superintendent of the Sunday School and a deacon of the congregation.

In 1880, the present stone church was erected. Jonathan Keim and Stephen S. Brownback, a son-in-law of David Keim, provided the initiative in constructing the church. Both men hauled stone and other building materials and helped with the construction work. Men and women of the community united in the project and no indebtedness was contracted. The first lovefeast was held in the church building in 1887.

For many years, the Harmonyville Church was an adjunct to the Coventry Church. Pastors from Coventry made periodic visits and conducted the Sunday evening services for the membership. Lewis M. Keim, born near Harmonyville in 1873, united with the church when he was fifteen years of age. While he was a student at Juniata College, the Harmonyville Church called him to the ministry. For a period of time he shared the preaching responsibilities in his home congregation. He later became the third pastor of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church of Philadelphia.

On January 1, 1900, William G. Nyce (1869-1954) was called to the ministry by the Parker Ford Church. In 1902, he was advanced to the ordained ministry. He was married to Lena Keim, the daughter of Jonathan and Margaret Keim, on January 1, 1903. He moved into the Harmonyville community on November 1, 1905 and, for the next forty-eight years (1905-1953), ministered to the Harmonyville Church. Although the work at Harmonyville was supervised by the Coventry congregation, Bro. Nyce was entrusted with the pastoral responsibilities.

William G. Nyce was born at Fairview Village in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. He attended the Norristown public schools. Later, when he was employed as a compositor for *The Gospel Messenger*, which was printed at Mount Morris, Illinois, he continued his education at Mount Morris College. His academic and business training prepared him for his work as bookkeeper and secretary to the Keystone Meter Company in Royersford, Pennsylvania.



*W. G. Nyce*

As the Harmonyville congregation grew under his leadership, the membership appealed to the Coventry Church for the right to be a separate congregation (July 24, 1909). Although the right to organize as an independent congregation was granted, there was a delay in the creation of a separate organization. On January 25, 1912, when the organization was accomplished, Bro. and Sister Nyce were called to minister to the new church. In 1909, Mrs. Nyce became the teacher of the first Women's Bible Class in the church and continued to teach for more than half a century.

In the next several decades, the leadership of the church forwarded some interesting resolutions and petitions to the district and annual conferences of the denomination. For example, in 1911, the Harmonyville Church appealed for a graded series of lessons for the systematic study of the Bible.<sup>4</sup> The church was concerned since "a very large proportion of the church, both young and old, are without a working knowledge of the Bible." The plan suggested a broad knowledge of the Bible dealing with the substance of each book of the Bible, the history of the Bible, and the doctrinal content of the Scriptures. This request was referred to the General Sunday School Board for consideration.

In 1917, when the nation was heavily involved in the war abroad, the Harmonyville Church requested the district meeting for a "permanent Peace and Service Committee" whose duties it should be to cooperate with other committees throughout the brotherhood. The district responded to the request by appointing a committee composed of W. G. Nyce, E. G. Diehm, M. C. Swigart, George D. Kuns and H. W. Rohrer.

In the 1920s, when war fever was increasing again, the Harmonyville Church requested the district and the brotherhood to formulate "an

authoritative statement. . .on the subject of war and peace." An extensive statement was formulated under the title, "Our Relation To War and Peace", and was accepted by the Hershey Annual Conference (1924).

W. G. Nyce served for a number of years as the district Sunday School Secretary. He not only promoted Christian Education in his local church but was actively engaged in visiting most congregations of the North Atlantic District to encourage better educational practices. In 1921, he spoke at the Hershey Annual Conference on the theme, "Grading and Housing the Sunday School." At this time, he made the following observation:

"Every church will be so built or remodeled as to include departmental rooms for Beginners, Primary, Junior and Intermediate Departments of the children's division and class rooms for young people's and adult classes, and an assembly room for the school at large or facilities for throwing all these rooms into one. . ."

The Harmonyville congregation was well-organized for the systematic study of the Bible and its doctrines. Prayer meetings in the 1920s were devoted to doctrinal studies prepared in printed outlines. These outlines were later printed in pamphlet form and were used by some other district churches. Some members pursued teacher-training classes to improve their own teaching efficiency and others studied from the Galen B. Royer booklet, *The Bible-Says-So*. The congregation appealed to the district in 1926 for a periodic visitation of weaker churches by ministers of the district in order to share with them sermons which were "doctrinal and evangelistic."

In 1933, as the result of a request of the Harmonyville Church, the North Atlantic District appointed a Christian Education Committee of five persons. The original committee was composed of W. G. Nyce, W. S. Price, Esther N. Swigart, Mrs. Quincy A. Holsopple and George Wilson, Jr. In 1934, the committee met in consultation with a similar committee from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to discuss methods and future strategies in Christian Education.

In the years in which W. G. Nyce ministered to the church, the plain stone church underwent many changes. A room was added in 1909 to provide for a Primary Department. In 1945, in preparation for the congregation's centennial, the church building was renovated and improved. Bro. Nyce sent out the following notice to the district and to former members of the congregation:

"It has been thought that many who spent their early years in this little church might like an opportunity to contribute to this very needful work. The matter of \$500 needed would be a trifle for a larger congregation, but for a little church like ours it justifies an appeal for help."<sup>5</sup>

The anniversary was held in the renovated church building on May 20, 1945 with C. C. Ellis, President-Emeritus of Juniata College, as speaker.

The Harmonyville Church has existed to serve an agricultural community. For many years, when the community life was stable, the Sunday School served well over a hundred persons. The church membership, however, never rose above sixty-four persons during Bro. Nyce's pastorate. In the 1930s and 1940s, the trend of the nation toward an urban-centered culture kept the congregation small in size. Even as early as 1860, the Harmonyville Church was a small church surrounded by slowly developing cities. When city-life became dominant in the twentieth century, small communities relied heavily upon urban centers as the hub of their associations. The result was the loss of church members to the city.

While he ministered to the church, Bro. Nyce established a nursery business to assist in the support of himself and his family. He assembled a hundred variety of perennial flowers. He specialized in growing more than five hundred kinds of dahlias, and later he grew roses for a hobby. In 1951, the following newspaper account recognized his accomplishments:

"Though he was eighty-two years old yesterday, the Rev. William G. Nyce, pastor of the Harmonyville Church of the Brethren, still finds time and energy to put in a fifteen-hour day. He rises at 6:30 A.M. and usually spends the morning tending his garden of twenty-five beds of perennial flowers in a field across the road from the Harmonyville Church. . . The Rev. Nyce has preached sermons in the Brethren Church every Sunday for the past forty-five years until this past December."<sup>6</sup>

In December, 1951, an associate pastor was provided by the congregation to assist Bro. Nyce. Gerald Francis O'Donnell (1912-1970), a former resident of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, was baptized as a member of the Parker Ford Church of the Brethren. He was called to the ministry at Parker Ford (April 20, 1949) and was ordained in October, 1950. He and his wife, the former Hilda Steinrich, shared pastoral responsibilities at the Harmonyville Church until January 1, 1953, at which time Bro. O'Donnell became the pastor-in-charge.

With the assistance of the District Mission Board, Bro. O'Donnell ministered to the congregation until 1957. The congregation added a church basement with a kitchen and instructional facilities in 1955. In the fall of 1957, Bro. O'Donnell resigned to accept the pastorate at Royersford.

Daniel A. Hoopert (1915- ), who was licensed to the ministry in the Gettysburg Church of the Brethren, was called to serve as the new pastor. He was officially installed as pastor on October 22, 1957. For the next seventeen years, Bro. Hoopert gave faithful direction and service to the congregation. On November 24, 1963, the district advanced him to the eldership.

"A Service of Recognition and Fellowship", held on June 17, 1962, honored members of the church and Sunday School for their labors on behalf of the congregation. Outstanding among those who gave their

time and talent to the congregation were Lena Keim Nyce (1878-1967), the wife of William G. Nyce, and Sylvia Keim (1870-1973), who began teaching Sunday School at the age of fourteen and continued teaching for more than sixty years. Leonard Keim (1878-1969) was a Sunday School teacher for sixty-seven years and a Sunday School superintendent for thirty years. He also served thirty years as the assistant superintendent. Leonard Keim was installed into the office of deacon on September 12, 1909, by Elder J. P. Hetric. In addition, Bro. Keim was the church secretary for more than sixty years.

Arthur Lloyd and Albert Wunderlich were also honored by the congregation. Arthur Lloyd was elected a deacon in May, 1950. Albert Wunderlich was a trustee of the church for twenty-two years.

An annex and a Sunday School building were added to the church sanctuary in 1971. Services of dedication, held on July 11, 1971, were in charge of the Building Committee, consisting of Ellis B. Savage, chairman, Irwin M. Swavely, assistant chairman and John C. Kolle. On the day of dedication, the new church building was entrusted to the trustees in a formal act of presentation. The trustees consisted of John F. Betz, John C. Kolle, Stager H. Lloyd, Walter McCalicher, H. Blaine Moyer, Leon Pierce, Louis Stoltzfus, Irwin H. Swavely and Henry B. Yorkey.



*Harmonyville Church of the Brethren*

John C. Kolle (1949- ), the son of Carl and Miriam Keim Kolle, succeeded Bro. Hoopert in the pastoral work. Bro. Kolle was native to



*John C. Kolle and Barbara*

the congregation and was the grandson of Leonard Keim. He is married to the former Barbara Jayne Williamson. Like many other pastors of the congregation, the pastor is a farmer in the community. The district executive, Harold Z. Bomberger, installed Bro. Kolle into the pastorate on May 12, 1974.

Since 1911, when the North Atlantic District was formed, the church has licensed or advanced the following men in the ministry:

W. Harry Dickinson. Called to the ministry in 1916.

Alvin S. Alderfer. Licensed to preach on November 4, 1939.

J. Merrill Dickinson. Licensed to preach on February 5, 1939.

Robert H. Lloyd. Licensed to preach on June 4, 1939.

Daniel A. Hoopert II. Licensed to preach on October 14, 1971.

Ordained to the ministry on September 24, 1972.

John C. Kolle. Licensed to the ministry on September 23, 1973.

Brethren who have been elders-in-charge or moderators of the congregation are:

Charles F. McKee. 1918.

W. G. Nyce. 1919.

L. R. Holsinger. 1920.

W. G. Nyce. 1921-1954.

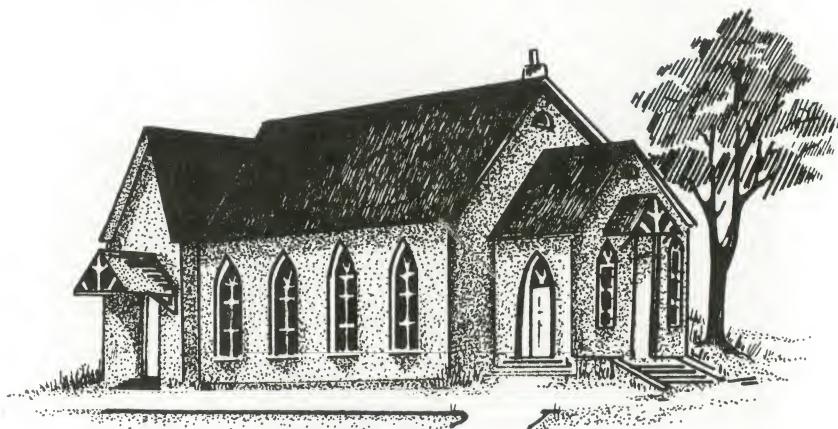
Alvin S. Alderfer. 1955-1960.

Daniel A. Hoopert. 1961-1974.

Ellis B. Savage. 1974-

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## GREEN TREE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

*Green Tree Church*

The large evergreen tree which gave the Green Tree congregation its name is gone. In the years since 1845, other evergreens have been planted in its place. The original tree stood on the corner of the lane which leads to the Umstadt farm along the Schuylkill River close to the village of Oaks, Pennsylvania. Here, on land bordering Egypt Road, the Green Tree Church had its beginnings on June 6, 1845. A stone church was constructed to provide for the worship needs of the Brethren who lived on the fertile lands along the Perkiomen Creek and the Schuylkill River. Egypt Road, circling the Philadelphia area, and constructed in 1731, passed through rich agricultural lands.

Egypt Road today passes through a region which has become heavily industrialized. Oaks has been called one of the most industrialized villages of the United States. Once a distinctly rural area, the community is expanding with new industries and housing. The Green Tree congregation is strategically located in the heart of this changing countryside.

The eight-acre cemetery adjoining the church was set aside on March 24, 1858, when John H. Umstad donated more than two and a half acres for burial purposes. On June 2, 1884, an additional acre of land was acquired from Milton Davis. Robert Titus, of the Synthane Corporation, donated nearly three acres of land in August, 1942, for use as a cemetery. In this acreage, adjacent to the church building, are buried the Umstads, Prices, Gotwals and Francises, all of whom were active in the formation of the Green Tree Church.

The congregation has an established tradition of fine leadership. Many of its early ministers not only helped to determine the patterns of local church life but became brotherhood leaders as well. John H.

Umstad (1802-1873), "meek as Moses and impulsive as Peter",<sup>1</sup> was an able administrator who helped to lay the plans for the first districts in the brotherhood. James Quinter (1816-1888), an early Brethren teacher of "common school", was fifty years in advance of his age when he promoted higher education for the Church of the Brethren. When Bro. Quinter conducted evangelistic meetings in the Green Tree Church in November, 1856, he noted:

"The recollection that several of the converts had in former years been our pupils and that they had often bowed with us in our school room while we endeavored to implore heaven's blessings upon them, gave us increased pleasure at witnessing their 'good confession'."<sup>2</sup>

Isaac Price's (1802-1884) own zeal for the abolition of slaves and temperance reform led to a strong sense of social justice in the church. Jay G. Francis (1870-1958) was an early advocate of accurate church records and a prominent historian in the Philadelphia area. Jacob T. Myers (1851-1915), the son-in-law of James Quinter, ministered to the Green Tree congregation as pastor "until such time when it might be mutually agreeable to discontinue." He ministered to the congregation for twenty-eight years to the day (July, 1877-July, 1905). During his successful pastorate, the church increased from 137 members to 300 members, and a strong musical foundation was established by Singing Schools. The first school was organized about 1900 with Robert Trucksess as its leader. Harry Crosscup and Robert Gottschall were also early leaders of the congregation's musical programs.

Charles Forney McKee (1871-1946) became the pastor of the congregation on September 9, 1907. His early life was spent in business and teaching in Maryland and Pennsylvania. He was married to Iva Susan Kaylor of the Manor congregation of Maryland (1897). Bro. and Sister McKee resided in Royersford from 1893 to 1907. On October 24, 1906, the Royersford Church called him to the ministry and he was advanced to the full ministry on January 19, 1907.

In 1907, a Sisters' Aid Society was formed in the congregation. By 1914, the organization had fifty-four active members. Dues were paid at the rate of five cents per month and the making of quilts, bonnets, and aprons supplemented this income. The organization was divided into a flower committee, a visitation committee, a sales committee and a sewing committee.

Evangelistic meetings have usually been conducted in the church in the spring of the year and have generally been enthusiastically supported. Beginning on March 22, 1915, L. R. Holsinger conducted evangelistic meetings. During the next several weeks, the evangelist spoke to a crowded house each night and thirty-six persons united with the church during the meetings and eight made confessions after the meetings closed. M. C. Swigart, pastor of the Germantown Church, conducted a series of meetings in April, 1917. On one Saturday evening, seventy-nine members of the Germantown Church came a distance of twenty-five miles in "auto trucks" to attend the services.<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1917, Arthur Dunmore was chosen as the congregation's choir director. The brotherhood did not establish its first music committee for the improvement of congregational worship until 1919. In the Green Tree Church, the following persons have served as music directors: Mrs. Calvin Eroh (1918-1919), Harry Crosscup (1920-1924), Paul Zuck (1925-1931), Mrs. Ruth T. White (1939-1945), Robert Campbell (1946-1951), Dorothy Kehr (1954-1957), Walter Longenecker (1957-1959), Marybeth O'Donnell (1959-1964), Elsie Wisler (1964-1966), George Over (1969-1971) and Charles Fry (1971- ).

In June, 1921, pastor McKee resigned and moved to Covington, Ohio. Before he moved, the district passed resolutions of appreciation for his ministry to the district over a period of twenty-five years, fourteen of which were spent as pastor of the Green Tree Church. The church presented him with a Ford touring car for his services.

In 1920, the congregation purchased a parsonage in Oaks. Pastor McKee and his family lived in the new home nearly a year before their departure for Ohio. When the pastorate was vacant, the congregation called Harvey S. Replogle and his family from the Scalp Level congregation (1913-1921) in Western Pennsylvania.

Harvey Snowberger Replogle (1871-1940) was the son of Isaac B. and Elizabeth Snowberger Replogle of Bedford County, Pennsylvania. At the age of fifteen he united with the church during an evangelistic meeting. At the age of eighteen, he began to teach in public schools. He was called to the ministry by the New Enterprise Church (August 22, 1896) and was advanced to the eldership in the Plum Creek congregation (October 9, 1910). At the time he was called to the ministry, few pastorate were available. Bro. Replogle wrote of these early years:

"I began pastoral work in 1904. Then pastors were few in the Church of the Brethren and few of our people knew from experience what was expected of a pastor. Few realized the need of a minister to give full time to the congregation. To fill appointments, preach funerals, marry lovers, baptize such as should be saved and anoint the sick was the work of the minister. Since the free ministry had been supplying all of this, why employ a pastor?"<sup>5</sup>

On December 12, 1921, nearly three hundred persons greeted the new pastor and his family at a reception. The months and years which followed were to be active pastoral years. Bro. Replogle and his wife, the former Josephine Arnoid, maintained a busy schedule for the next nineteen years (1921-1940) in the ministry.

On February 5, 1922, a special missionary meeting was held at the church. There were readings, recitations and reminiscenses of Bro. Replogle concerning his association with various missionaries, including Ida C. Shumaker and Fannie Studebaker Quinter, the wife of James Quinter. Mrs. Quinter lived for a few years within the Green Tree congregation and her daughters were well-known in the district. The interest of the congregation in missions has remained strong since this time. In 1931, the church began to give financial support to Clara Harper for her work on the Nigerian mission field.

In 1926, a debate centered on the theme: "Resolved that every church should spend as much on missions as it spends for local work." The judges awarded the decision to the affirmative team. In 1934, Ida C. Shumaker visited the congregation and spoke effectively on behalf of missions. A correspondent said: "We feel a great blessing has come to us because of this visit, especially to the young people." Four youth from the district decided to give their lives in Christian service as the result of the meeting.

H. Stover Kulp made a tour of the churches in 1936. In October, he spoke to the Green Tree membership, appealing to the congregation to remember that "the world is our field. We must not neglect any front or area of work to which God has called us."<sup>6</sup>

The Green Tree Sunday School was organized in 1869 by Joseph Fitzwater, a nephew of John H. Umstad. Although Bro. Umstad was opposed to the Sunday School movement, he gave his nephew permission "to go ahead and do all the good you can." Bro. Fitzwater was the Sunday School superintendent from 1869 until 1922. He was succeeded by S. H. Yocum (1922-1927), Paul Zuck (1927-1930), George J. Hallman (1930-1935), Eli H. Stoltzfus (1935-1959), Neil Detwiler (1959-1961), Paul Wisler (1961-1963), George J. Hallman, Jr. (1963-1972) and Dorothy Faith Shoemaker (1972- ).

In 1921, when the Green Tree school building was advertised for sale, the Young Men's Bible Class believed it could be useful to the church. With forty-eight cents in their class treasury, and much encouragement from their teacher, Katherine Detwiler, they purchased the building for \$1,635. When the class held its annual banquet in the building in 1929, the last note on this annex was burned.

The first Vacation Bible School was held at the church in the summer of 1922 under the direction of Pastor Replogle. Commencement exercises were conducted for the fifty children and young people who attended. By 1924, the enrollment increased to 105 scholars. "We sent out three trucks to bring in the children. An able corps of six teachers was engaged in the work."<sup>7</sup> Frances E. Bishop taught Bible School during Bro. Replogle's pastorate. After his decease in 1940, she directed the Bible School for thirty-one years (1940-1971).

A report for 1926 stated, "We started the new year with an attendance of 245 in Sunday School and an enrollment of 301." In this year, a system of grading by departments was introduced, resulting in an increased attendance and interest. A Board of Religious Education was formed in 1927 and consisted of H. S. Replogle, Alvin Landes, David Famous, Oliver Grimley and Marie Williams. This board planned for an hour of evening religious instruction for Intermediates and Juniors of the church. By 1929, forty-one boys and girls were receiving weekday religious instruction in the annex under the direction of Paul Zuck.

At a special business meeting in May, 1927, the church decided to call Paul Zuck as the assistant pastor of the congregation. Active as a director of music, Bro. Zuck continued to work with choirs, youth organizations and the Christian Education program. In 1923, an orchestra

was formed to provide music during the Sunday School hour. About the same time, Bro. Zuck organized a band with both young people and adults as members. When Bro. Zuck relinquished this work, Charles Rawlins directed the band (1931-1933).

The church cleared land for recreational uses, sponsoring a baseball league, a tennis court program and a series of summer playground events. Land along the Schuylkill and the Perkiomen was also used for church camping.

Under Bro. Replogle's able leadership, the church membership grew to 430 persons. The average attendances at the church and Sunday School increased from less than 200 in 1921 to nearly 300 by 1930. Bro. Replogle had a keen interest in accurate records. On December 5, 1925, he spoke of "Signs of a Growing Church", speaking primarily from statistics he kept in the years he ministered to the church. He noted the church membership had a net increase of sixty-four in the period 1921-1925. Bro. Replogle also noted that in the four-year period he preached 608 sermons and baptized eighty-six persons.

Annual homecoming services were inaugurated at the Green Tree Church in 1922. These fall events were red-letter days for the membership as old acquaintances were renewed and earlier days in the congregation's life were recalled. W. J. Swigart was a frequent evangelist in the church in the 1880s and 1890s. He recalled at a homecoming service on September 9, 1928, that at least a dozen people were present who had been converted during his revivals. Rebecca Griffin (b. 1838) and Jesse Davis, who attended the Green Tree Church as early as 1858, were the oldest persons present at the 1928 homecoming.

Some members recalled their memories of earlier church leaders. Mary Supplee Evans, a member of the Philadelphia First Church, had close ties with the Green Tree congregation since her parents united with the church in 1831. Samuel Supplee (d. 1875) and Catharine R. Supplee (d. 1885) were among individuals who were converted and baptized during a general revival in the Schuylkill River Valley. Mary Supplee Evans wrote,

"James Quinter, when quite a young man, taught the country school not very far from the Green Tree Church, which was built in the summer of 1845. I have heard my parents, who also helped to build the church, tell what a wonderful help and power Bro. Quinter was to that little struggling band of believers who had no place in which to worship except in each others' homes or in a hall. They were all poor but they all worked together and Bro. Quinter preached for them."<sup>8</sup>

Jay G. Francis collected much of the family history of the founders of the Green Tree Church. He wrote that the slaughterhouse of the Continental Army of Valley Forge was on the John H. Umstad farm. Live cattle herded by General Anthony Wayne were brought to Valley Forge to be slaughtered for food. The cattle were taken to the farm on the edge of Oaks and were butchered along the banks of the Schuylkill River. Bro. Francis related how his grandmother told his father, "I



*John H. Umstad Mansion House*

often saw George Washington. He frequently came up to our farm and looked after the slaughtering of the cattle. He often held me on his lap.''<sup>9</sup> The grandmother was Peggy Umstad Francis, the wife of Thomas Francis.

The Green Tree Church has always been active in district, brotherhood and community affairs. The fine facilities of the church have attracted many district conferences and youth meetings. Many leaders of the brotherhood have spoken in the church at some time or another since its formation. In like manner, the membership has shown a lively interest in brotherhood affairs. In 1927, when the Annual Conference convened in Hershey, no less than eighty members of the congregation attended the sessions.

The busy pastoral career of Harvey S. Replogle was suddenly brought to a close on June 1, 1940, when the pastor was stricken with a fatal heart attack. A grateful people met at the Green Tree Church and at the New Enterprise Church of the Brethren to pay their respects to one who gave himself unstintingly to Christian work.

Early worship services in the Green Tree Church were accompanied by a reed organ. Always strong in its music program, the congregation purchased a new Hammond Electric Organ in June, 1937. The first organist of the church was Sara Gotwals. She was succeeded by Sara Bechtel, Helen Hallman, Orpha Bechtel, Dorothy McKee, Clara Hallman and Marie Williams. In 1931, Clara Hallman Famous was elected organist and served for the next thirty-three years. She was

succeeded by Nancy B. Keyser (1964-1966) and Barbara Stover (1966- ).

On August 30, 1940, David Kirk Hanawalt (1910- ) was installed as pastor of the congregation. The son of Henry William and Phoebe Rothrock Kirk Hanawalt, Bro. Hanawalt was formerly a high school teacher in the McVeytown Oliver High School. He was licensed to the ministry (1928) and ordained (1929) in the Spring Run Church of the Brethren in Middle Pennsylvania. Just prior to the beginning of his pastorate in the North Atlantic District, he was advanced to the eldership (August 18, 1940). On June 26, 1938, Bro. Hanawalt was married to Eloise Perdetha Clapper of Hopewell, Pennsylvania.

Under Bro. Hanawalt's leadership, the congregation was a frequent site for Sunday School conventions, regional conferences, ministers' meetings and district conferences. The Green Tree Church cooperated in civic programs, including the organization of a Boy Scout Troop in 1941. The church met in outdoor vesper services with a neighboring Hungarian Reformed Church and cooperated in community Week of Prayer services.

On November 8, 1941, Bro. and Sister Jacob C. Kopenhaver (1871-1956) observed their golden wedding anniversary at the Green Tree Church. The Kopenhavers, who were married in the manse of the Lower Providence Presbyterian Church, became members of the Church of the Brethren. For many years prior to his service as deacon (December 8, 1924) and trustee (December 6, 1925) in the Green Tree Church, Bro. Kopenhaver was the church clerk in the Mingo congregation. Seventy-five persons greeted the Kopenhavers on the occasion of their anniversary.

Another prominent member of the church was Lewis E. Griffin who gave years of faithful service as the Sunday School Secretary (1880-1933) until his retirement. The congregation elected him Secretary-Emeritus in 1933. He was also treasurer of the Sunday School from 1898 until 1922.

Several members of the Green Tree Church dedicated themselves to mission work in Nigeria. At the Asheville Annual Conference in 1942, John B. and Mildred Hess Grimley were commissioned to work with the church in West Africa. Bro. Grimley was called to the ministry by the Green Tree Church on September 8, 1937.

The church membership met in a series of services at the John H. Umstad home on July 11, 1943. The worshippers met beneath the trees near the mansion which had been constructed in 1785. They also visited the barn which was constructed in 1831 and where the Brethren conducted a lovefeast service at a time when "neither hay nor straw had yet been placed" in it.

Stained-glass windows were installed in the church sanctuary and services of dedication were conducted on September 12, 1943. Ross D. Murphy was present at the homecoming service to dedicate the new windows and new hymnals which were presented to the church by Bertha Lance. These sanctuary improvements were made in prepara-

tion for the centennial observance of the congregation.

In 1944, the trustees were awarded a property which was known as "The Wren's Nest." The buildings and land were the summer home of Willoughby Reed, a druggist of Norristown. It consisted of a fine bungalow and a small two-story barn, with an accumulation of antiques and curios gathered by the owner. Three acres of land extended along the Perkiomen Creek. According to the will of the late Dr. Reed, the estate was deeded to the Montgomery National Bank. The bank released the property to the Green Tree Church to be used for recreational and religious purposes. A five thousand dollar trust fund for the maintenance of the estate accompanied the grant. The Green Tree Church permitted the North Atlantic District to use the estate as a camp site. In the 1950s, the property was returned to the bank.

During the period of World War II, the Green Tree congregation promoted Lord's Acre projects. On August 7, 1945, the trustees decided to cultivate land and to use the proceeds of the crop sales for church improvements. At the beginning, the seed, labor and fertilizer were donated. The men of the church planted twelve acres of wheat on the athletic field and four acres of barley on other lands. In 1946, the congregation realized \$804.43, which was placed in the building fund. In following years, the congregation realized \$1,042.80 (1947), \$300 (1948) and \$420 (1949) from the sales of crops.

These projects were also useful in supplementing the congregation's support for Brethren Service overseas ministries. In 1946, the youth conducted a house-to-house campaign to collect relief clothing, gathering nearly a ton of clothing in addition to used fats which were processed into soap. In 1947, members conducted an August baked goods and vegetable roadside stand to support Brethren Service work.

The *Yearbook* of the Church of the Brethren showed a decrease in membership for the Green Tree Church in 1947. A report to the district conference explained the reduction in membership:

"In 1947, the Green Tree Church showed a falling off of 137 persons, a condition made necessary since a considerable number of people had united with the church from time to time at great distances; since that time, they have been accepted on the rolls of other churches."<sup>10</sup>

The church reduced its membership rolls from 365 in 1946 to 228 in 1947.

On October 1, 1947, David K. Hanawalt became Director of Overseas Relief for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and the Pennsylvania State Council of Christian Education. He continued a week-end ministry to the church until January 31, 1948. During the period he ministered as pastor of the Green Tree Church (1940-1948), he was active in church camping, was chairman of the Phoenixville Area Ministerium, was a member of the North Atlantic District Board and was moderator of the district.

The congregation called Ivan C. Fetterman, of Glen Campbell, Pennsylvania, to assume the pastoral work. Bro. Fetterman began his work

with the church on November 1, 1948. Prior to his ministry in the North Atlantic District, he was in charge of the work at the Montgomery Church of the Brethren (1939-1948), where he had been baptized (1922), licensed (1926) and ordained (1928) to the Christian ministry. Ivan Clyde Fetterman (1906- ) was the son of John and Sara Ellen Walker Fetterman of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. He received his formal education at Juniata College (1931), the University of Pittsburgh (1938), Bethany Biblical Seminary (1940) and did graduate work at Columbia, Harvard, Princeton and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. From 1927, he was an administrator and a teacher in the public schools of Pennsylvania. On June 21, 1947, he married Gertrude Haer of Indiana County.

Bro. Fetterman became the pastor of the church at the time when it was preparing for its centennial celebration. The interior of the church was refurbished with new pews, pulpit furniture, lighting fixtures and carpeting. The parsonage was modernized and a two-car garage was constructed. A dwelling opposite the church was purchased for use by a full-time sexton. These and other improvements cost the congregation \$31,000. The Green Tree Church was remodeled three times in the course of a century: first, in 1890, during the pastorate of J. T. Myers; secondly, in 1907, during the pastorate of C. F. McKee; and in 1944-1949, during the pastorates of David K. Hanawalt and Ivan C. Fetterman.

Approximately 1,500 people attended the centennial celebrations during the week of September 7-11, 1949. Community, district and brotherhood leaders met for the observances. The centennial committee published a fifty-page booklet to commemorate a century of the church's life. Among those who addressed the audiences were Roland L. Howe, Ivan C. Fetterman, and C. C. Ellis, who used as his theme, "Our Three-fold Brethren Heritage."

The men of the congregation planted crops to support the church's outreach program. In 1949, the following notice appeared in *The Gospel Messenger*:

"At the present time we have sixteen acres of wheat, ten acres of corn, and 4,000 strawberry plants sponsored by the men of the church. Recently, we sponsored an antique and auction sale, clearing \$175. We also had a strawberry festival and cleared \$130." <sup>11</sup>

The youth organization of the church was reorganized in 1949. The youth fellowship hosted 120 district youth at a conference led by D. Eugene Lichtry. In 1950, the youth purchased a sound film projector and presented it to the church for use in visual education activities. On the evening of the presentation, the film "Simon Peter" was shown to the membership.

The years between 1950 and 1955 were filled with a variety of church activities. The building indebtedness was gradually reduced and contributions were made to a district fund to provide a new jeep for use by Paul W. Petcher, a medical missionary to Africa. In 1951, the first Peach Festival and Country Fair was sponsored by the church's Wel-

fare Committee. The Ladies' Aid Society filled fifty baskets of food to contribute to the Montgomery County Home.

For faithful and significant service to the church and community, the congregation honored Bro. Fetterman by sponsoring a trip to the Holy Land for the pastor and his wife.

Pastor Fetterman prepared a directory for the congregation in 1955. The last previous directory had been prepared by H. S. Replogle in 1933. Bro. Fetterman offered a strong pulpit ministry and was active as a teacher of membership classes. In 1956-1957, the Fettermans hosted Staffen Nordstrum, an industrial exchange visitor who had come to America to observe the manufacture of plastics.

The church purchased Schulmenck Bells and a Memorial Record Book of donors. Benjamin Funk inscribed the record book with the names of individuals who subscribed to the church improvement fund. As the congregation's attendance grew, a new parking area was purchased and paved. A four-car garage was constructed on the church property in 1955 by the Men's Work organization. During Bro. Fetterman's pastorate (1948-1958), the church more than doubled its local and outreach giving.

In grateful appreciation for their services, the membership met in August, 1958, in a testimonial and farewell dinner to the pastor and his wife. The Fettermans accepted the pastorate of the Hollidaysburg Church of the Brethren in Middle Pennsylvania.

D. Howard Keiper conducted a service of installation for Wayne H. Dick on October 4, 1958. He was previously the pastor of the New Enterprise Church of the Brethren (1951-1958). Wayne Hollinger Dick (1913- ) is the son of Trostle P. and Annie Marie Hollinger Dick. Bro. Dick was licensed (1935) and ordained (1942) to the Christian ministry in the Coventry Church of the Brethren. He received his formal education at West Chester State College (1931-1933), Juniata College (1935-1937), Bethany Biblical Seminary (1944-1947) and Penn State University. He was married to Hazel Evelyn Rosen of Chester County, Pennsylvania, on August 2, 1941.

The Green Tree Church is strategically located to render services to many communities. Much of the membership is scattered over an area with a fifteen mile radius from the church. Under the leadership of Bro. Dick, the congregation was active in its services to the Juvenile Detention Home, the Geriatrics and Rehabilitation Center and the Pennhurst State School and Hospital.

During Bro. Dick's pastorate, the congregation became involved in an Every-Family Call Visitation program (1959) and appointed a Long Range Planning Committee to project the future expansion of the church (1963). The outreach ministry of the congregation has been extensive and funds to support overseas and home mission projects have been given regularly. The Vacation Bible School has supported the Navajo Indian Mission in New Mexico. Doris Ann Edwards, a nurse on the hospital ship HOPE, spoke at the church in 1964 and showed slides of her work in Peru, South America.

The church was saddened by the loss of one of its active members on September 19, 1964. Eli H. Stoltzfus (1889-1964), a former Sunday School superintendent and church official, served the Green Tree Church for many years. He was born at Leola, Pennsylvania.

When Bro. Dick resigned as pastor to become a rehabilitation counselor to the Montgomery County Geriatric and Rehabilitation Center in 1968, the congregation called Raymond R. Boose from the Erie Church of the Brethren (1962-1968). He was installed as pastor on September 8, 1968.

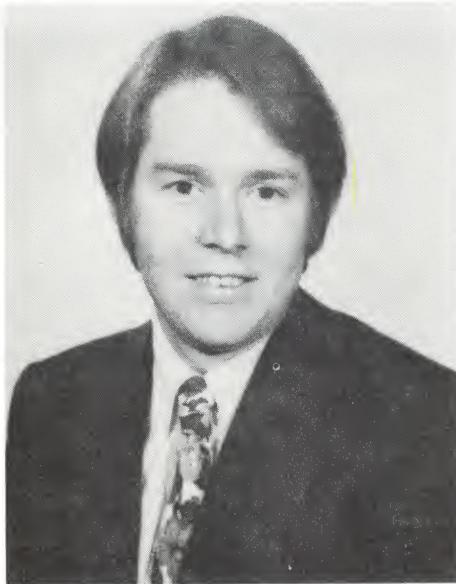
Raymond Richard Boose (1922- ) is the son of Walter Rutter and Bertha Hermess Boose of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was baptized (1933), licensed (1948) and ordained (April 4, 1950) to the ministry in the Lancaster City Church of the Brethren. On December 30, 1946, he married Mary Elizabeth Stauffer of Landisville, Pennsylvania. Bro. Boose attended Elizabethtown College and graduated from Bethany Theological Seminary (1952). He has also attended the Bethany Seminary Extension School sessions and the Massanetta Springs Bible Conferences in the state of Virginia.

Bro. Boose led the congregation in its preparation for a new building program and continued an active ministry to the community. In 1971, he resigned the work at Oaks to become the pastor of the Woodbury congregation in Middle Pennsylvania.

W. Warren Shoemaker, a native of Ohio, was employed by the church as the new pastor. He was installed as pastor in September, 1971. W. Warren Shoemaker (1923- ) is the son of Wilbur David and Verna Pearl Stoner Shoemaker of Stark County, Ohio. He was formerly a member of the East Nimishillen congregation of Northeastern Ohio, where he was baptized (1932), licensed (1942) and ordained (1943) to the ministry. Bro. Shoemaker was the pastor of the Prices' Creek Church of West Manchester, Ohio (1960-1971), prior to his ministry in the Green Tree Church. He received his formal education at Manchester College (1945) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (1949). On June 6, 1946, he was married to Dorothy Faith Essick, formerly of Pottstown, Pennsylvania.



*W. Warren Shoemaker*



*John William Lowe, Jr.*

In 1972, as the result of a retreat directed by Harold Z. Bomberger, the congregation began to search for a youth minister. John William Lowe, Jr. (1944- ), pastor of the Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren, was employed to conduct the youth ministries. A graduate of Juniata College (1966) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (1970), Bro. Lowe was advanced to the full ministry in 1970 at the Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren. He is married to the former Pamela Kay Brubaker of Ohio.

On September 12, 1973, in a special council meeting, the congregation elected the following persons to a building committee: John Hallman, Carol Funderwhite, Bill Keyser, Jr., Michelle DeWane, Karlton Smith, Brent Steininger, Marybeth O'Donnell, Bill Detwiler, Roland Smith, Evelyn Parson, Bill Algeo, Donald Smith, Irene Gehm, Neil Detwiler and Frances Bishop. Ex-officio members were George Hallman, Jr., Church Board chairman; Shirley Steininger, Church Clerk; Claudine Bradford, Treasurer; John W. Lowe, Jr., Youth Minister and W. Warren Shoemaker, pastor.

The building committee organized on November 4, 1973, with Neil Detwiler, chairman, Donald Smith, vice-chairman, and Shirley Steininger, secretary. When Bro. Detwiler resigned from the committee as the result of an accident, George Hallman, Jr., was elected chairman, and Robert Smith, Sr., was appointed to the committee.

The building committee studied many plans and considered numerous building companies. On Sunday, April 7, 1974, the church employed Cogun Industries, Church Expansion Specialists, of Boardman, Ohio, as the General Contractor for a new building. A formal ground-breaking ceremony was conducted on Sunday, June 23, 1974, following the morning worship. The building program was begun on



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August 1, 1974 and completed in March, 1975.

The new church structure is constructed on a three-acre tract of land close to the Annex building. The land was given to the congregation by the Synthane-Taylor Corporation of Oaks and its parent company, Alco Standard Corporation, with headquarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

The congregation dedicated a new contemporary-style structure on May 1-4, 1975. The church consists of a Christian Education center, a fellowship hall and a sanctuary capable of seating 260 persons. A circular stained-glass window was removed from the original Green Tree Church and placed in the chancel area of the new \$240,000 building. Speakers for the dedication services were Harold Z. Bomberger, district executive, and Joel K. Thompson, executive secretary of the World Ministries Commission.

In the period since 1911, the Green Tree Church has called or advanced the following men to the Christian ministry:

April 4, 1917. Wilbur B. McKee installed into the ministry.

December 25, 1927. Thomas Albert Bowers, licensed to preach.

July 28, 1936. John B. Grimley, licensed to preach. Ordained on September 8, 1937.

February 2, 1969. Ronald Ray Boose, ordained to the ministry.

The following brethren have conducted the business affairs of the church as moderators:

C. F. McKee, 1918-1921.

H. S. Replegole, 1922-1940.

David K. Hanawalt, 1941-1947.

Ralph H. Jones, 1948.

Ivan C. Fetterman, 1949-1958.

Donald H. Shank, 1959.

Wayne H. Dick, 1960-1968.

E. Grant Keyser, 1969-1972.

Alvin S. Alderfer, 1973-

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## SPRINGFIELD CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



The fifth Church of the Brethren in America was probably the Great Swamp Church of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Brethren began to move into the northern portion of Bucks County before John Naas and Rudolph Harley established the Amwell Church in New Jersey. These settlers took up rich pasture lands in the region close to Quakertown. The community of Quakertown was erected on a site covering several thousand acres and generally known as "The Great Swamp." The region was later known as "Flatland" and finally, "Richland."

The custom of reading from Matthew 18 prior to a baptismal service in the Church of the Brethren is said to have been instituted in the Great Swamp congregation.<sup>2</sup> George Adam Martin, who became a Seventh Day Baptist, once suggested to Martin Urner, Sr., that these Matthean instructions concerning the settling of disputes might profitably be substituted for the customary reading of Luke 14. Thus, in 1737, a long-standing custom was begun in the brotherhood.

The members of the Great Swamp Church met in house meetings for more than a generation. They met in quietness and improved their farmlands in a section of the commonwealth which had been taken from the Delaware Indians by the fraudulent Walking Purchase (1737). These colonial Brethren were led by Abraham Duboy (1738-1748) and John Frick (1748- ) until the time of the American Revolution. When the desolating tide of the revolution centered in Bucks County, it is possible that the Brethren work was abandoned.<sup>3</sup>

The work in Springfield Township, Bucks County, was revived about

1864. Families of Brethren in the sections about Coopersburg began to meet in private homes for worship. They assembled in the homes of Moses Shuler, Harrison Trumbauer, Samuel Kauffman, David Yoder, Adam Stauffer, Peter Kauffman, Henry S. Moyer and Benjamin Price. Samuel Harley and William Nyce, ministers of the Indian Creek congregation, led the services for the Brethren. As the interest mounted, steps were taken to purchase a private house which the members hoped to remodel into a meetinghouse. On April 2, 1866, Abraham and Hannah Hottel deeded an acre of ground to the congregation for the construction of a new meetinghouse.

A stone church building was erected on the plot of ground east of Coopersburg, Pennsylvania. This building, thirty-six feet by forty feet, was built by Daniel Booz, Benjamin Price and Henry Trumbauer. Harrison Trumbauer and Abram Stouffer were selected to be the first trustees of the property. When the building was consecrated for worship in 1866, Samuel R. Zug of Eastern Pennsylvania was the dedicatory speaker.

The first Sunday School was organized in 1867. Daniel Booz was the original Sunday School superintendent and Mrs. Booz instructed a Sunday School class in the German language. Some of the succeeding superintendents were Benjamin Price, Jackson Matz, Jonas Price, Allen Landis, Mathias Steely and David Koch. Regular singing schools were led by Clayton Moyer.<sup>4</sup>

For many decades the congregation was served by "home ministers." This term, used commonly at the turn of the twentieth century, described men who had been called from the membership to minister as preachers and visitors. In 1868, the Springfield congregation became independent of the Indian Creek Church and was served by local ministers, including Moses Shuler, Jonas Price, Benjamin Hottel and John Ackerman. As late as the 1920s and 1930s, notes from the congregation referred to "home ministers." One such reference stated: "Bro. (Nathan) Kilhefner, our home minister, gave us an inspiring sermon. His text was, 'The Drive Is On'."<sup>5</sup>

When the North Atlantic District was created as the Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York (1911), the Springfield Church remained a part of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. This decision to remain with the original district was due in large part to the influence of Benjamin K. Hottel who grieved over a divided district. The church continued to follow the practice of using the non-salaried "home ministers." In 1909, and in 1913, the following were listed as ministers and officials: Benjamin K. Hottel, John Ackerman, William F. Spidle and J. F. Ream.

Benjamin K. Hottel (1850-1942), the son of Abraham and Hannah Kauffman Hottel, was born in Bucks County on May 22, 1850. His parents owned the land on which the Springfield Church was built. At the age of twenty, he united with the church. On November 18, 1871, Bro. Hottel married Sarah Ann Stauffer, the daughter of Abraham and Sallie Yoder Stauffer of Lehigh County. He was licensed (1878) and

ordained (1883) to the ministry by the Springfield congregation and, in 1893, was advanced to the eldership. Bro. Hottel began to operate a lumbering business in 1880 in connection with his farming interests. In 1912, he donated four acres of land to be added to the church's burial grounds.

In 1868, members of the Springfield Church were interested in beginning a ministry in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They erected a frame meetinghouse in the city and conducted regular preaching services for a number of years. In 1921, after the services ceased, the church building was sold. One of the members said that the Brethren did not succeed because of their plain dress.

On December 22, 1908, the Springfield membership purchased the Beulah Chapel in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, in order to provide a meeting place for members of the denomination who were migrating to the area. For a number of years, services were conducted at both the Springfield and Quakertown meetinghouses. Although the Quakertown members raised the question of supporting a pastor to conduct the work, the question was deferred (January 3, 1920). On October 2, 1920, some members of the church council expressed the conviction that more effective work could be done if the Springfield Church were divided into two congregations. A secret ballot showed that a majority of the membership was in favor of a division. When the membership could not agree on a dividing line, the two meetinghouses continued as one congregation.<sup>6</sup>

The church showed new growth and increased attendances in the period during and following World War I. In 1917, for example, 100 persons sat around the Lovefeast and Communion tables. A note from June 4, 1920, stated: "The largest lovefeast in many years was held at the Springfield house."<sup>7</sup> Interest in mission increased to the extent that a correspondent said, "Our congregation has done more for missions and benevolent purposes this year than at any previous time."<sup>8</sup> The church created a mission board in 1921, consisting of Abram Hottel, Robert Mohr and Anna Kilhefner.

On April 22, 1926, J. H. Moore and T. T. Myers, of an Annual Meeting Committee, inquired whether the district would be willing to accept the transfer of the Springfield congregation from the Eastern District. Although Benjamin K. Hottel wished for the two districts to remain united, the congregation voted to unite with the North Atlantic District. The district meeting, in session at the Parker Ford Church (1926), accepted the Springfield congregation on condition that the Eastern District would be willing to release the church.

In 1927, the Springfield Church called William J. Wadsworth, Jr., of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, to minister to the members. Bro. Wadsworth served for one year. On September 1, 1929, Berzey B. Ludwick assumed the preaching and visiting responsibilities for both the Quakertown and Springfield memberships. In 1932, the two groups decided that each should select its own minister instead of sharing one. At this time, H. H. Moyer was elected to preach at the Springfield

house and B. B. Ludwick served the Quakertown people.

The Quakertown Church was organized as an independent congregation on March 3, 1936. George W. Landis (1904- ), who was licensed to the ministry on March 21, 1936, began to minister to the Springfield congregation. Benjamin K. Hottel retired from the active ministry in 1934, having served the church fifty-six years as minister and elder. The Sunday School honored him with a service of recognition on his eighty-ninth birthday anniversary in 1939. In this service, according to a reporter, "he told us of the early Sunday School when the Bible was used as the textbook and when chapters of Scripture were memorized. In closing, he quoted two chapters of Scripture in German."<sup>9</sup>

George W. Landis ministered part-time to the Springfield Church from September, 1936 until 1946. In these years, the congregation was active in its support of the brotherhood's Brethren Service ministries. It also frequently gave support to the local hospital. "At our Thanksgiving meeting, we gathered fruit and vegetables to contribute to our local hospital."<sup>10</sup> The Sunday School and the youth department sent gifts to servicemen who were overseas.

In order to foster the growth of the Sunday School and church, the Springfield congregation purchased a bus to enable people to attend the services. Children and adults who were otherwise unable to attend services before were brought to the church. A report in 1945 stated that the use of the bus increased attendance at the services by thirty per cent.<sup>11</sup>

Homecoming services in the fall of each year have been a hallmark of the Springfield congregation. These services have provided an opportunity for former members and friends of the church to renew their contacts with each other and with the church membership. Each year, the programs have been characterized by fellowship and preaching.

The seventieth anniversary of the church was marked on May 10, 1936. Special preaching and music were features of the all-day service. H. H. Moyer spoke on the theme, "An Instructive Memorial"; A. A. Price spoke on "The Three A's of God"; and George W. Landis addressed himself to the question, "Is The Bible The Word of God?"

The Springfield Church has cooperated with brotherhood and district programs. The youth have been involved in district youth rallies and have supported Brethren Service ministries. Jean Landis (1949-1950) and Matilda Landis (1950-1951) each spent a year in Brethren Volunteer Service. Miriam Steely spent a week visiting Castaner, Puerto Rico, in 1953. When the brotherhood Peace Caravan toured the North Atlantic District, Rodney Davis and Ralph Dull visited the church and discussed the Brethren peace program.

J. Richard Gottshall (1924- ), a native of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, served the Springfield congregation as pastor from January 1, 1947, until May, 1949. In the summer of 1949, Earl K. Ziegler (1929- ), a student of Elizabethtown College, ministered to the members as a student-pastor. When Bro. Ziegler returned to

college in the fall, Norman S. Frederick, of Souderton, Pennsylvania, supplied the pulpit. Bro. Ziegler returned in the summer of 1950 to serve as the part-time pastor, concluding his ministry in 1951.

Conway E. Bennett (1921- ), who was licensed to preach at the Little Swatara congregation in 1948, succeeded Bro. Ziegler as part-time pastor (1951-1953). In 1952, the members constructed an annex to the church to provide more Sunday School rooms. Much of the labor on the project was provided by men of the congregation. The completed annex was dedicated on November 14-15, 1953, with B. F. Waltz and George W. Landis as guest speakers. Dorothy Schultz sketched an outline of the church building for use on special commemorative plates.

The pulpit was supplied by visiting ministers in 1953-1954. Harold Jones, of Harleysville; William P. Nyce, Jr., of Lansdale; and John D. Keiper, of Pottstown, were guests of the church while the congregation remained without a pastor. In 1954, Martin Scholten, of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, provided regular preaching and visitation for the membership. One church record stated, "Bro. Martin Scholten brought his farewell message to the church on February 19, 1956."<sup>12</sup>

The Springfield Church then called Linford James Rotenberger (1916- ) to serve as its pastor, beginning in February, 1956. Bro. Rotenberger, a native of the Springfield congregation and a resident of Quakertown, was licensed in 1937 and ordained the following year in the Quakertown Church. On February 11, 1941, he was united in marriage to Kathryn Ream of Quakertown. Prior to his pastorate in the Springfield congregation, he served churches in Thurmont, Maryland (1938-1939), Lansdale, Pennsylvania (1941-1945), and the York Second Church of the Brethren (1945-1954).



*Linford James Rotenberger*

One of the active Sunday School classes of the church was the "Plus Ultra" organization. It based its name on a Latin phrase, "plus ultra",

which means "more beyond." This class was active in promoting missions and the church building programs. It purchased a clock (1955) and ginko trees for the church lawn (1956) in memory of Benjamin K. Hottel.

The total church has been mission-minded. The congregation supports Mrs. Merle Bowman in Nigeria; gives partial support to Fred and Janet Beam, in Kenya, East Africa; Ben and Bonnie Kulp in New Guinea and Richard and Pat Albright in Japan. The church has also supported a full-time missionary in Ecuador.

The outreach program of the church involves many classes and organizations in ministries to the community. The deacons have shared in house-to-house visitations to share the Christian message. The congregation has offered financial aid to stricken families. The Women's Fellowship ministers to the residents of the Allentown State Hospital and has made hundreds of comforters, lap robes and knotted quilts as service projects. The Women's Fellowship has also assisted the Peter Becker Home.

On October 30, 1966, Joseph M. Long, Tri-District Executive Secretary, was the guest speaker at the centennial observance of the church. Sharing in this service were Allen Landis, who presented a historical sketch of the church and led in old-fashioned German hymn-singing, and Paul Delp, who directed an evening program of music.

The Springfield Church has called or advanced the following men in the Christian ministry:

John Ackerman. Ordained to the eldership, July 20, 1918.

George W. Landis. Licensed to the ministry, March 21, 1936.  
Advanced to the eldership on April 7, 1945.

William H. Rivell. Licensed to the ministry on December 18, 1937.  
Ordained on January 7, 1939.

Alfred A. Landis. Licensed to the ministry, January 6, 1940.

Linford J. Rotenberger. Advanced to the eldership, December 29, 1957.

Philip Edwin Margush. Licensed to the ministry, November 10, 1974.

The following brethren have directed the life of the church as elders-in-charge or moderators:

1926.--Benjamin K. Hottel.

1926.--Milton C. Swigart.

1927.--R. H. Brumbaugh.

1928-1930.--Milton C. Swigart.

1930-1934.--J. A. Bricker.

1935-1936.--Q. A. Holsopple.

1937-1938.--District Ministerial Board.

1939.--Milton C. Swigart.

1940.--H. S. Repogle.

1941.--District Ministerial Board.

1942.--Trostle P. Dick.

1943.--District Ministerial Board.

1944.--David K. Hanawalt.  
1945.--District Ministerial Board.  
1946.--David K. Hanawalt.  
1947.--George William Landis.  
1948.--Irwin S. Hoffer.  
1949.--District Ministerial Board.  
1950-1953.--Glen E. Norris.  
1954.--District Ministerial Board.  
1955-1973.--Ralph R. Frey.  
1973-- Harold F. Keppen.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### ROYERSFORD CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



Royersford is an incorporated borough located on the east bank of the Schuylkill River. The community was named for Edward Royer, a Huguenot immigrant, who maintained a ferry across the river. The community owes its growth to the founding of a stove industry and the building of the Reading Railroad. Incorporated as a borough in 1879, its population increased to 2,607 in 1900. In 1974, the community had grown to a settlement of 4,000 persons.

*The Brethren Beacon*, a Royersford Church quarterly published in the 1940s, stated that the congregation had its beginnings in a prayer meeting held in October, 1886, in the home of Mrs. Jacob Price on Adams Street.<sup>1</sup> These prayer services were continued until they expanded into a Sunday School. Meeting in the afternoon, the Brethren shared a building called Winters' Hall with the Episcopalians. The expenses of the hall were shared by these two groups and amounted to one dollar per Sunday for the Brethren.

David G. Wells was the first superintendent of the Sunday School which met for the first time on May 3, 1891, with twenty-five scholars, five classes and seven teachers. He was one of the owners of Smith, Francis and Wells, an industry located in Spring City across the Schuyl-

kill River from Royersford. When the Sunday School reorganized on April 5, 1892, W. S. Price became the superintendent and David G. Wells was the assistant.

It was the custom for members of the church and Sunday School to meet in private homes to conduct their business. One of the early meetings, convened on February 22, 1892, decided to purchase an organ for use by the Sunday School. At another meeting, in the home of David G. Wells, members of the church decided to take the initial steps to construct a church building. William Brower and Joel C. Freed were appointed a committee to purchase a lot. A vacant lot on Walnut Street opposite the Lutheran Church was purchased, but was sold in 1893.

Ground known as the Buckwalter lot was purchased at the corner of Third and Washington Streets for the sum of \$600. A series of handwritten *Minutes* of the early Royersford Sunday School discloses the various decisions involved in planning for the new building. These notes, on file in the Brethren Heritage Room at Elizabethtown College, were written in ink by William S. Price. Between March 7, 1893, and July 7th of the same year, in a series of planning meetings, the building committee arranged for the details of construction. The committee consisted of Frank Roeller, William S. Price, David G. Wells, W. C. Dettra and Joel C. Freed.

The decision was made to construct a meetinghouse of brick with an entrance facing on Washington Street. The church, trimmed with blue Wyoming stone, was to have arched windows. It was to have a baptistery. The walls of the sanctuary were to have a sand finish and the wood-work was to be of cypress. The aisles, platform and back rooms were to be carpeted. The roof was to be of slate and the exterior walls were to be cased with brick. The total cost of the construction was to be \$6,000.

The Royersford Church was constructed in the year of a national panic. A depression, which began with the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, spread rapidly across the nation during the summer of 1893. A committee appointed to receive contributions for the dedication dinner had received only \$8.91 by August 25th. In the face of the financial crisis, the planning committee agreed to receive a special offering to care for the dinner expenses. The committee which arranged for the meal on dedication day listed the following foodstuffs: "Three dozen loaves of bread, 200 rusks, 50 pounds of ham, eight pounds of butter, two pounds of coffee and six pounds of sugar and cheese."<sup>2</sup>

The program committee for the dedication of the church was composed of John Y. Eisenberg, William G. Nyce, David G. Wells, Mrs. Joel C. Freed, Mrs. Emma Tyson and Miss Lizzie Price. The community and members of the congregation were invited to attend the dedication of "a new chapel" on September 24, 1893. Speakers for the day of dedication included J. P. Hetric, J. T. Myers, T. T. Myers, Jesse C. Ziegler and John Y. Isenberg.

When the Sunday School was organized in Winter's Hall, it was customary to have preaching every two weeks following the Sunday School sessions. In the beginning, J. T. Myers (1851-1915) did much of the

preaching without charge. There was a preacher's fund as early as March, 1893. At this time, \$24.60 was credited as paid by donors and \$16.00 was listed as having been expended by W. G. Nyce, the treasurer. On October 6, 1902, Sunday School classes were changed to meet on Sunday morning, with preaching services following. Every Sunday preaching was inaugurated on March 6, 1897. Early ministers who shared preaching responsibilities at the church included J. P. Hetric, John Y. Isenberg, Jay G. Francis, Lewis Keim, Jesse C. Ziegler, Jacob L. Conner and Abraham L. Grater.

In the early years of congregational life, evangelistic meetings were conducted regularly, sometimes with two or more ministers sharing preaching responsibilities in the same series of meetings. The first converts to be baptized in the new church pool applied for membership during the preaching of J. T. Myers, Jesse C. Ziegler and Frank F. Holsopple in the fall of 1895. Earlier converts were received as members at the Parker Ford or Green Tree congregations. By January 1, 1898, there were seventy-eight members but no organized church.

A very early typewritten copy of the church membership rolls lists the names of thirty-three people who came from congregations such as Green Tree, Mingo, Huntingdon, Norristown, Coventry and Parker Ford. On April 3, 1900, eighteen members transferred their memberships from the Parker Ford Church to the Royersford congregation. With such encouragement, the growing congregation looked to the district for organization and recognition. The church was formally organized on January 7, 1901, by Elder Jesse P. Hetric, assisted by Elders J. Z. Gottwals and Abraham L. Grater. A list of sixty names exists on an early *Minute* book of the congregation. An additional forty-five members were received between 1901 and 1907. When D. R. Deeter, L. H. Dickey and D. Hays visited the church as members of an Annual Meeting Committee, they issued a certificate of recognition (November 15, 1901).

The church from the beginning showed an interest in missions and human needs. O. H. Yeremian, speaking on behalf of the oppressed Armenian people of Turkey, visited the congregation on September 9, 1900. He also spoke at meetings at Mingo, Parker Ford, Green Tree, Coventry and Harmonyville. W. G. Nyce said of his ministry, "He is well qualified to arouse the missionary spirit in the churches, his own conversion being constant testimony on behalf of the practical results of such work."<sup>3</sup>

The first name used by the body of worshippers at Royersford was "German Baptist Sunday School." No one remembers that German was actually spoken in any of the early services of the congregation. A mortgage on the property was made in 1893 under the German Baptist name. When the congregation was organized in 1901, the *Minute* book indicated the name to be "The German Baptist Brethren Church of Royersford." It continued to use this name officially until 1958, at which time it was changed to "The Royersford Church of the Brethren."

The church was without an employed pastor for nearly seven years. William G. Nyce, John Y. Isenberg, J. Linwood Eisenberg and Charles F. McKee ministered to the needs of the membership. The deacons of the congregation also shared in the visitation ministry. In 1903, the following persons were listed as deacons: William S. Price, Charles F. McKee, B. Frank Roeller and William Harley. Verna Price was installed as a deaconess on April 15, 1901, and Katie S. Roeller was installed on May 9, 1904. In 1905, the congregation paid Jesse P. Hetric \$2.50 per day to visit the membership.

On April 14, 1904, the church council extended a call to P. B. Fitzwater to accept the pastorate, beginning May 1, 1905. He was offered a salary of \$720 per year. Bro. Fitzwater asked to be relieved of his pastoral obligations before he arrived to begin his work. When word arrived that Alva J. Specht was available to minister to the church, the council extended a call to him on July 1, 1908. The church paid \$35 toward his moving expenses from Ohio and offered him a house free of rent. The congregation purchased a property at 327 Spring Street for the sum of \$1,900 for use by the pastor and his family. A. J. Specht remained with the church until May 12, 1909, at which time his resignation was received.

Alpaheus William Dupler (1883-1928), a former pastor of Ohio, began his ministry with the Royersford Church on June 2, 1909. During his brief term of service he was a student at Ursinus College (1909-1910). A. W. Dupler was called to the ministry at the Olivet congregation of Northeastern Ohio in 1904. His tenure with the church was brief because his interest in furthering his education was uppermost. He moved to Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, to complete his college work and to become a teacher of biology.

Quincy Leckrone, of Thornville, Ohio, served the congregation from September, 1910, until June 1, 1914. For part of this time he was also a teacher in the Royersford public schools (1913). Shortly after he arrived in the community, an announcement appeared in *The Gospel Messenger*:

"A series of revival meetings is now being held at the Church of the Brethren at this place, conducted by the pastor, Bro. Quincy Leckrone. The church owes a great deal to the pastor and his wife for their diligent and faithful work. The best Christmas entertainment ever given by the Sunday School in this place was rendered this Christmas season under the direction of the pastor and his wife."<sup>4</sup>

The church was composed of a number of active organizations in the years of Bro. Leckrone's pastorate. A group known as the "Christian Helper", was organized in 1894 and changed its name to "Christian Workers" in 1903. A Young Peoples' Society was active since 1901. On April 13, 1911, a group of ladies organized themselves into the "Whatsoever Band" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). A Missionary Society was formed in July, 1897, and performed many useful ministries on behalf of the church. A special Mothers' Day sermon was mentioned for the

first time in 1911.

In the period from 1913 to 1915, the church faced financial distress. The board of trustees appointed Elizabeth Price, Olive Flemings, Hannah Johnson, Hattie Gamble and Mrs. Michael Freed to act as collectors of church dues (January 7, 1913). These dues were to be received from each member the latter part of each month.

The mission interest of the congregation displayed itself in many forms. The church gave financial assistance to the Kensington Mission of Philadelphia (1906) and to the church at Harmonyville (1906). On missionary day, April 26, 1914, a reformed convict spoke of his experiences at the Galilee Mission in the city of Philadelphia. H. K. Garman, a member of Philadelphia First Church, also spoke of his experiences with inner city mission work.

When Bro. Leckrone resigned to accept a pastorate at Ashland, Ohio, the church designated W. S. Price, B. F. Roeller and A. P. Harley as a committee to seek a successor. "Any one who may think of taking up pastoral work at this place will please correspond with the brethren mentioned", said a notice in the denominational paper.<sup>5</sup> In the meantime, Charles F. McKee conducted many of the services of the church. On October 5, 1914, Harry W. Rohrer, a student of Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, was chosen temporary pastor at \$50 per month. The arrangement was not altogether satisfactory and the congregation had to borrow money to pay the pastor's last salary in July, 1915.

At a meeting held on August 22, 1915, D. Price Hylton, of Frederick, Maryland, was unanimously chosen pastor. He began his ministry in Royersford on November 1, 1915. A welcoming service was held for him and his family on October 24th, at which time J. P. Hetric spoke for the church, W. I. Book for the district and W. P. Price for the Sunday School. The membership of the church at this time was about one hundred persons. The total giving, for the year 1915, amounted to \$1,200. The Missionary Circle and the Whatsoever Band raised funds to assist the congregation in meeting some of its expenses. In 1916, for example, the Whatsoever Band provided funds for an electrical lighting system which replaced the old gas lighting system in the church.

C. C. Ellis was the guest speaker at the church on a Saturday evening in October, 1916, speaking on the theme, "The Legend of The Topaz." The audience heard an interesting lecture on the grace of gratitude. Bro. Ellis remained to preach to the Sunday morning audience.

D. Price Hylton submitted his resignation on April 12, 1917. He moved to Roanoke, Virginia, where he accepted a position in a bank. In 1917, the congregation established a parsonage fund with the understanding that the fund was to be invested in a local bank to draw interest "until the amount is sufficient to erect a parsonage." A committee was appointed to receive contributions for the new fund.

Edgar G. Diehm (1891- ), a recent graduate from Juniata College, began his work as pastor of Royersford on July 1, 1917. He and

his wife, the former Elizabeth Hertzler, of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, served the congregation for the next three years. He came to Royersford from the Claar congregation of Middle Pennsylvania (1916-1917) and attended Crozer Theological Seminary while he ministered at Royersford (1917-1920). In 1918, the membership decided to elect its pastor on an annual basis, increasing his salary to \$60 per month. In addition, he was granted a month's vacation each year.

The Royersford Church observed its twenty-fifth anniversary on September 29, 1918, with Jesse P. Hetric as the guest speaker. He was the presiding elder of the congregation since its founding. W. S. Price, one of the charter members, gave a brief history of the work which had been accomplished in a quarter of a century. Of special interest was the fact that the congregation called several men to the ministry, including C. F. McKee and W. G. Nyce, both of whom were guests on the anniversary occasion.

In October, 1919, the congregation purchased an Estey organ for \$400. The Whatsoever Band cooperated with the church in making the purchase.

The congregation was without a pastor for a number of months in 1920 when Edgar G. Diehm moved to Youngstown, Ohio. From November, 1920, until May, 1921, the pulpit was supplied by guest ministers. Foster Boyd Statler (1895-1973), a recent graduate of Juniata College and a student of Princeton Theological Seminary, was employed as the pastor, beginning on May 1, 1921. A church notice observed:

"Owing to the fact that our pastor, Bro. Statler, attends Princeton Theological Seminary, he can not be with us every Sunday. We are grateful for the time and the service he can give to us."<sup>6</sup>

During Bro. Statler's pastorate (1921-1923), there was a renewed interest in the church and Sunday School. A Young Men's class was formed in 1921. The enrollment of the Sunday School increased by twenty-five per cent from 1921 to 1922. The Primary and Beginners' Departments began to use a repainted and refurbished church basement.

The pastor, who had been in ill health for some months, submitted his resignation, effective September 1, 1923. Foster B. Statler spent several years in recovering his health before he entered the pastorate in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. During those times when Bro. Statler was absent from the Royersford Church, Wilbur K. McKee preached to the congregation. Wilbur Kaylor McKee (1898- ) was called to be the successor to Bro. Statler. The son of Charles F. and Iva Kaylor McKee, he was a graduate of Norristown High School (1914), Ursinus College (1918) and did graduate work at Crozer Theological Seminary (1918-1920). He was pastor of the Royersford Church from 1923 to 1928.

Bro. McKee, while ministering as pastor, was also an instructor in English at the University of Pennsylvania and an assistant professor of English at the Drexel Institute of Technology in Philadelphia. Before he served the Royersford congregation, he was pastor of the Wilmington Church of the Brethren (1919-1921).

Extensive improvements were made to the building in 1924 at a cost of \$1,200.

"During the past six months our church has been a busy place. The building has been cleaned and painted. New light fixtures and new pulpit furniture have been installed. The pulpit furniture was a gift of the Ladies' Aid Society. During the renovation, all services were held in the church basement."<sup>7</sup>

Services of dedication for the renovated sanctuary were held on January 25, 1925. Messages on this day were given by Wilbur K. McKee, A. M. Dixon, W. G. Nyce and H. S. Replogle.

The Royersford Church entertained the district meeting for the first time on April 28-29, 1925. The first day of the meeting emphasized missions. The Ladies' Aid Society of the congregation provided meals in the basement of the church. The congregation hosted district conferences again in 1933 and 1953.

In 1928, Bro. McKee moved to New York City to become a professor in the School of Commerce at New York University. For the next thirty-five years he served as professor and assistant dean of the school.

The congregation called Quincy A. Holsopple (1885-1961) on July 1, 1928, to become the pastor. He was the son of Elder Joseph and Catharine Lehman Holsopple of Western Pennsylvania. He was elected to the Christian ministry while he was at the Brethren Publishing House in Elgin, Illinois (1906), learning the linotype trade. In 1911, the Quehamoning Church of Western Pennsylvania asked him to represent the congregation in India. Before he set sail for India, Bro. Holsopple married Kathren Royer, daughter of Galen B. Royer. The Holsopplles served on the India mission field from 1911 to 1923, returning to America in the latter year because of impaired health. Before they ministered in the Royersford congregation, the Holsopplles served in the Plum Creek Church (1923-1926) and the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church (1926-1928).

The ministry of Bro. and Sister Holsopple extended from July 1, 1928, until September, 1937. Under their leadership, the congregation achieved a sound financial and administrative base. Missionary contributions increased, the church organization was strengthened and improvements were made to the church building. The general appearance of the property was improved by the planting of ornamental pines given by the Young Men's Class (1929).

In the winter of 1930-1931, an impressive and successful missionary education project was conducted by Kathren Holsopple. In a series of meetings prior to the evening church services, the children met to study missions of India. They constructed a miniature replica of the village of Vali, learned songs in the Gujarati language and, at one of the meetings, served a meal of India in the church basement. The meal consisted of rice and meat curry served with Indian relish and cashew nuts.<sup>8</sup>

Missionary Sundays have been red-letter days in the life of the congregation. Although classes gave their mission offerings each Sunday,

twice each year a missionary day has been observed. At this time, the various classes present the offerings they have collected. On June 7, 1936, Mrs. Holsopple spoke to the congregation about "Homes and Homes", contrasting the life of a Christian home in India with the life of a Moslem home. The offering for this day amounted to \$359.90.

When Bro. Holsopple resigned in 1937 to accept the call of the Mount Pleasant Church of Western Pennsylvania, the pulpit was supplied for a period of time by Samuel H. Hess and Caleb W. Bucher. In the summer of 1938, Bro. Bucher was requested to minister as the supply pastor. He continued as the part-time pastor of the church for the next thirteen years.

Caleb White Bucher (1908- ) is the son of Rufus P. and Naomi White Bucher of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of Elizabethtown College (1937) and Temple University (M. Ed, 1943; D. Ed, 1953). He has also pursued graduate work at the Teachers' College of Columbia University (1948, 1949) and Duke University in North Carolina (1934, 1935, 1936). Bro. Bucher united with the Church of the Brethren at the Mechanic Grove congregation (1918) and was licensed (1929) and ordained (1930) to the ministry in his home congregation.

In the years he ministered to the Royersford Church, he was also the principal of the M. J. Brecht School of Manheim Township in Lancaster County. He has also held the position of Chairman of the Elementary Education Department at Millersville State College (1962-1971) and was Director of Graduate Studies in Elementary Education. In 1973, the Manheim Township School System named its modern school building the "Caleb W. Bucher School" and Manheim Township named a park in his honor.

A correspondent wrote of Bro. Bucher's leadership in the Royersford Church: "We have been having interesting and helpful services."<sup>9</sup> Each worship service began to feature special music. Each October, a service of consecration for teachers and officers was held in the form of a candlelighting program. Members of the Sunday School who came at least forty Sundays of the year were given incentive awards in the form of books. The sanctuary of the church was improved with varnishing and painting (1939).

In 1942, when the fall lovefeast service was observed, a period of time was devoted to the recognition of men and women from the church who were in the service of their country. The pastor prepared for this event by sending a letter to each of the absent members. Enclosed with the letter was a sealed envelope to be opened at 7:35 P. M., the time of the lovefeast service at the church. A copy of the letter was also mailed to each of the parents. "At that time, our congregation worshipped with them wherever they were located. . .Our service was one of inspiration."<sup>10</sup>

At the time of the scattering of the membership during the war years, an editorial committee was formed to produce a quarterly church paper called, *The Brethren Beacon*. This paper was mailed to friends in the community, nonresident members and members who were in the

service of their country. Some of the initial issues of this quarterly recalled the earlier history of the congregation. The editorial committee consisted of Donald L. Snively, Katherine Rogers, Lloyd Rogers, Iva Roeller and Paul Tyson.

The Royersford Church had twenty-two men and women in the armed forces during World War II. The women of the church were busily engaged in numerous Brethren Service activities, including the baking of cookies for Valley Forge Hospital. The pastor visited Brethren servicemen at the Veteran's Hospital at Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Christmas boxes were mailed by the church to all members who were in the services of their country. After the war, members of the congregation collected clothing and made soap for the needy in distressed lands.

In the midst of World War II, the congregation celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary. J. Linwood Eisenberg, a former minister of the congregation, returned to speak. W. G. Nyce presented an historical address at the afternoon service. The candlelighting service in the evening recognized the charter members of the church. The charter members who were active in the church at this time were W. S. Price, Elmira Price, Emma Tyson and Annie Wells.

Another milestone in the history of the congregation was reached when new deacons were installed into office (October 8, 1944). The church called E. Earl Nelson, Donald L. Snively, Lloyd G. Rogers and Paul Tyson.

The Royersford Church has never had a large membership. Its greatest enrollment was in 1936 when 136 members were listed. If the worshippers were ever inclined to develop an inferiority feeling about their numerical strength, Bro. Bucher tried to allay this feeling with comments in the church paper:

"The fact that a thing is big has consumed our imaginations in America. Small churches matter. Important thinking and important action take place in small groups. . .Our church has remained relatively small. We have only one hundred and fourteen members and many of them are in far places. It is safe to say that sixty members carry on the work at home base, but we are proud of our place in Christendom. Our young people have gone to many communities and many churches where they are now rendering important service."<sup>11</sup>

Among those who ministered in far places were Charles M. and Mary Beth Bieber. Mary Elizabeth Bieber (1922- ) is the daughter of Lawrence R. and Mary Force High, former members of the Royersford congregation. She is a cousin of the pioneer missionary, H. Stover Kulp. On September 16, 1945, Charles M. Bieber (1919- ) transferred his membership from the Philadelphia First Church to the Royersford Church and on November 4, 1945, Ross D. Murphy and Caleb W. Bucher conducted a service of ordination to the ministry for Bro. Bieber. "This was the first service of this kind to be conducted in the Royersford Church for many years."<sup>12</sup> The Biebers served as missionaries in Nigeria (1950-1963).

During Bro. Bucher's pastorate, the congregation lost some influential leaders in death. B. Frank Roeller, secretary for the church and the Sunday School for many years, died on January 20, 1938. Elmira Price, a charter member, died in 1945. It was her dream to establish a church in the Royersford community.

"Her joy was full when, in 1893, under the efficient direction of B. Frank Roeller, the last nail was driven and the last touch of paint applied, and the new carpet (which she helped to select) was laid. A new house of the Lord was dedicated by the Brethren in Royersford."

Two more charter members died in 1947. On April 14, 1947, Emma Tyson passed into eternal life. Also, Sister Annie Wells, then residing in Pottstown, died in November.

The church and the district suffered a severe loss in the death of the congregation's last charter member, William S. Price, on May 13, 1949. The son of John Jacob and Salome Price of Upper Providence Township, Bro. Price was active in founding the Royersford Church. An early graduate of Juniata College, he became a specialist in business administration, general accounting, cost accounting and tax reporting. For twenty-five years he served as the superintendent and treasurer in the accounting department of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*.

From 1911 until 1948, Bro. Price was treasurer of the North Atlantic District. He was also treasurer of the District Mission Board from 1911 until 1927. At the time of his death, he was president of the District Mission Board. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Juniata College (1936-1949), serving as chairman of the Finance Committee and chairman of the Trustee Board. In 1942, he became acting treasurer of the college and, a year later, the treasurer. He resigned as college treasurer and as chairman of the Finance Committee in 1948 because of declining health.



William S. Price

Caleb W. Bucher, C. C. Ellis and Ross D. Murphy presided at the memorial service for Bro. Price. On January 8, 1950, the Shaw family presented a candleabrum to the church in memory of Bro. Price.

The press of pastoral responsibilities and increasing educational obligations made the work at Royersford difficult for Bro. Bucher. In his absence during the summer months, the pulpit was supplied by local ministers. Mark C. Ebersole and Lowell Zuck supplied the pulpit during the summers of 1949 and 1950. In 1951, after nearly fourteen years of pastoral ministry, Caleb W. Bucher resigned as pastor and elder of the congregation.

Wilbur A. Martin (1914- ) was unanimously elected pastor of the church on December 30, 1951. When Bro. Martin and his wife Evelyn undertook the work in Royersford, they were planning for a career in overseas missions. They remained with the church until 1957, at which time they resigned to sail for Nigeria, West Africa.

During Bro. Martin's pastorate, the church purchased a new Wurlitzer electric organ (1952) at a cost of \$1,902.62. The youth choir, organized in 1950 under the leadership of Hilda Buckwalter, secured new gowns in 1953.

Stained glass windows, with designs of vines, pomegranates, roses and crosses, were placed in the sanctuary in 1955. The total cost of this improvement was \$4,700. The sanctuary improvements were dedicated at a special service on November 13, 1955, with Caleb W. Bucher and Wilbur K. McKee as guest speakers at a homecoming.

The church council considered a basis for admitting members into the church fellowship on September 30, 1956. The council agreed to continue to conform to the requirements of trine immersion in baptism. At a council meeting held on December 16, 1956, the church reversed its decision and agreed to accept into full membership persons in good standing in other Christian churches upon the presentation of a letter of transfer.

A farewell dinner was held at the church for the Martins in January, 1957. The Willing Workers class prepared the meal and program and the congregation presented a gift to the departing pastor and his wife. A candlelighting service in the sanctuary was led by Warren Groff. The Martins prepared for their overseas assignment as houseparents at the Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria.

In the months from February to August, 1957, when there was no resident pastor, the preaching was done by visiting ministers. The church deliberated on whether it would seek a full-time or a part-time ministry. On May 19, 1957, Gerald F. O'Donnell, of Spring City, was elected to serve as part-time pastor of the congregation.

Gerald F. O'Donnell (1912-1970) became the new pastor on September 1, 1957. He was the son of James F. and Agnes Brower O'Donnell of Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Formerly a member of the Lutheran Church, Bro. O'Donnell was baptized at the Parker Ford congregation by Clayton H. Gehman. He was licensed (1949) and ordained (1950) to the Christian ministry at the Parker Ford Church. On November 10,

1934, he was married to Hilda Steinruck.

The church purchased a brick parsonage at 600 Green Street in the community on October 9, 1958. At an open house dedication service on May 24, 1959, Alvin S. Alderfer, John B. Grimley and Gerald F. O'Donnell spoke.

The name of the congregation was officially changed to "The Royersford Church of the Brethren" in 1958, the year of the denomination's 250th anniversary. In this same year, Alvin P. Harley was able to represent his congregation at the 250th Anniversary Convocation in Schwarzenau, Germany. Later in the year, the congregation entered the Anniversary Call program of recommitment.



*Royersford Church of the Brethren*

In the 1960s, many physical changes were made in the church building. New lantern type lighting fixtures were installed in the church auditorium (1961). The church members painted the interior and the exterior of the building in 1962 and 1963. New hardwood floors and new pews were installed in the spring of 1963. In the following year, new carpet was laid in the auditorium and adjoining rooms.

When Alvin P. Harley died in December, 1961, the church began to call new deacons to office. Donald H. Mannion was installed as deacon on October 21, 1962. Alfred Stierly, Jr., and his wife, were installed into the office on November 10, 1963. Lawrence High was made an

"honorary deacon" on January 10, 1967. Rodney O'Donnell and John Ellis were elected deacons on September 19, 1972, for terms of three years each.

The will of Verna Shaw Price, who died on February 5, 1965, provided the sum of \$6,000 in trust to bear interest toward supplemental pastoral support. The will also provided that if this purpose is no longer feasible, then one half of the trust shall be paid outright to Juniata College and the remaining half to the General Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren at Elgin, Illinois.

In 1968, the congregation prepared a historical pamphlet for the Seventy-Fifth anniversary of the church. It was prepared by Phyllis Hollenbach, Raymond E. Hollenbach and Robert R. Hollenbach. This commemorative booklet was distributed to friends and members who gathered to celebrate the church's achievements. The speaker for the occasion was Caleb W. Bucher, former pastor and a professor at Millersville State College. At the afternoon service, Wilbur A. Martin addressed the congregation.

A building fund committee was created in April, 1969, to plan for future Sunday School expansion. This committee consisted of Rodney O'Donnell, John Ellis, Mrs. Charles Miller, Sr., Mrs. Lloyd Rogers, Mrs. Charles Bowers, Mrs. Howard Johnston and Mrs. Albert Reppert.

The church membership was saddened by the sudden death of its pastor on October 28, 1970. Active in pastoral duties and his work with the Jones Motor Company until a few days before his death, he was stricken with a coronary attack. The congregation appointed a memorial committee to arrange for appropriate remembrances. A new pulpit, a clergy bench and new paneling for the platform and pulpit were placed in memory of Gerald F. O'Donnell and dedicated on September 26, 1971. In 1973, a cross was added to the pulpit area as part of the memorial.



*Gerald F. O'Donnell*

Alvin S. Alderfer (1900- ), who was moderator of the congregation, was asked to serve as interim-pastor. He continued this ministry until 1975. Previously he pastored churches in Norristown, Hatfield, Quakertown and Parker Ford. He completed his High School education at the age of twenty-nine years at Temple University High School. He is also a graduate of Juniata College (1929-1932) and Temple University (M. Ed, 1953). On March 17, 1921, he was married to Gertrude Adams of Mainland, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Alderfer is a graduate of a business school and worked as a secretary.



*Alvin S. Alderfer and Mrs. Alderfer*

The Royersford Church of the Brethren has been active in the affairs of its community and district. It has been a mission-minded congregation, always ready to respond to human need at home or abroad. From this church have gone a number of leaders to serve the church-at-large.

The following brethren have been called to the ministry by the congregation:

April 26, 1902. W. G. Nyce, advanced to the second degree ministry.

October 25, 1903. J. Linwood Eisenberg, elected to ministry. Advanced to the second degree on November 29, 1903.

October 24, 1906. Charles F. McKee, elected to the ministry. Advanced to the full ministry on January 19, 1907.

November 4, 1945. Charles M. Bieber, ordained to the ministry. Advanced to the eldership on October 10, 1954.

The following elders-in-charge or moderators have served the congregation:

- 1893-1927. Jesse P. Hetric.
- 1928-1938. Quincy A. Holsopple.
- 1939-1941. District Mission Board.
- 1941-1952. Caleb W. Bucher.
- 1953-1957. Wilbur A. Martin.
- 1958. Alvin S. Alderfer.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

## GEIGER MEMORIAL BRETHREN CHURCH



In the closing decade of the nineteenth century, a congregational meeting of the Philadelphia First Church decided to extend its Christian work into northwest Philadelphia. A committee, consisting of T. T. Myers, S. S. Brownback and J. W. Cline, proposed a location and the work was begun. Joseph W. Cline and Stephen S. Brownback worked as Sunday School superintendents and Julia Croft and Emily Kingdon assisted the mission by working with children. The first Sunday School service was conducted on November 29, 1896, at 2610 West Lehigh Avenue. Diligent work prior to this meeting brought forty-five scholars to the first service and sixty scholars to the second.

The new work in northwest Philadelphia was generously supported by Mary S. Geiger, a member of Philadelphia First Church. T. T. Myers once remarked about the beginnings of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church: "In 1896, we started a mission Sunday School at Twenty-Sixth Street and Lehigh Avenue. The expenses of the work at this place were and are entirely borne by Sister Geiger."<sup>1</sup> As the work expanded, the Sunday School was soon relocated in a storeroom of a large building on the southeast corner of Twenty-Sixth Street and Lehigh Avenue (October 24, 1897).

The work prospered sufficiently to encourage a regular preaching ministry. In the spring of 1898, a successful revival meeting was conducted and several persons united with the mission. Joseph W. Cline

(1866-1946), a teacher and a member of Philadelphia First Church, was called to the ministry (April 29, 1898) and advanced to the full ministry (January 2, 1899). Bro. Cline was a native of the state of Virginia and the son of John A. and Mary C. Cline of Augusta County. He was a graduate of Bridgewater College and attended Temple University and Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

Encouraged by the progress of the work on Lehigh Avenue, Mary S. Geiger decided to aid in making the work permanent. On July 18, 1898, she purchased a valuable lot, sixty feet by a hundred feet, on the north-east corner of Twenty-Sixth and Lehigh Avenue. A contract was let for the construction of a stone chapel and Sunday School room. A dwelling was also erected to the east of the chapel. The cornerstone for the building was laid on October 2, 1898. On November 27, 1898, M. G. Brumbaugh preached the dedicatory sermon for this Sunday School unit, with T. T. Myers, J. T. Myers and Joseph W. Cline assisting in the meeting.

The trustees decided the new building should be called, "Mary S. Geiger Memorial Brethren Church." The name was unacceptable to Sister Geiger, who suggested that it should simply be called "Geiger Memorial Brethren Church" to include her husband. The trustees adopted the name officially on September 28, 1898. The name has never been changed although the denomination became "Church of the Brethren" in 1908. In addition, Sister Geiger endowed the mission with \$5,000 to support the growing work.

Joseph W. Cline directed the construction of the chapel. He was also the first pastor of the new congregation. Bro. Cline later said of these years in Philadelphia, "I organized the Sunday School as a mission and then built the church. Our dear Sister Geiger paid my salary and all the expenses. Then she furnished the money to build the church."<sup>2</sup> On September 23, 1899, Bro. Cline made a trip to California to marry Dora Emma Kuns, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Kuns.<sup>3</sup> Soon after their marriage, the Clines moved to California to become active as the first paid pastor of the denomination in California.<sup>4</sup>

Charles O. Beery (1871-1959) ministered to the church between November, 1900, and September, 1901. Bro. Beery was called to the ministry at the Pleasant Hill Church of the Brethren in Ohio (September 2, 1897). He was the son of Enoch and Mary Jay Beery. On June 16, 1898, he was married to Lou Ella Repleglo of Iowa. The new pastor of the church received his formal education at Mount Morris College and Juniata College.

On November 1, 1901, Lewis M. Keim (1873-1940) assumed the pastorate at the Geiger congregation. A native of the North Atlantic District, he was elected to the ministry at the Coventry Church of the Brethren (July, 1893). Shortly after he began his ministry in Philadelphia, he married Mary M. Myers of Shirleysburg, Pennsylvania. Bro. Keim was a graduate of Juniata College (1901) and a member of the college debating team. He inaugurated the morning worship service at the Geiger Church. During his ministry (1901-1905), he baptized forty per-

sons as members of the Church of the Brethren.

Jacob T. Myers (1851-1915) became the fourth pastor of the congregation in September, 1905. He spent the next six years in strengthening the church as an active pastor, evangelist and church administrator. Prior to his work in Philadelphia, he visited many of the congregations of the Eastern and North Atlantic Districts as an evangelist. He moved to the North Atlantic District in 1872 from Western Pennsylvania. On September 20, 1877, he married Lydia Isabella Quinter, the daughter of James Quinter.

During his pastorate (1905-1911), Bro. Myers witnessed a tremendous growth of the Sunday School at the Geiger Memorial Church. When he retired from the active pastorate in 1911 for reasons of health, he wrote,

“Our Sunday School now numbers considerably more than four hundred, with an average attendance of nearly three hundred, and the attendance is still increasing. Prospects are encouraging in both church and Sunday School.”<sup>5</sup>

The growth of the Geiger congregation was so promising that Philadelphia First Church encouraged it to become an independent congregation. Mary S. Geiger provided the funds for the erection of a new and larger church sanctuary beside the original chapel. This building was dedicated on December 29, 1907, with M. G. Brumbaugh, T. T. Myers, I. N. H. Beahm, Charles Bame and J. T. Myers as speakers. The new sanctuary contained beautiful stained glass windows presented in memory of “Bishop T. T. Myers and Bishop J. T. Myers” and another to honor “Henry Geiger, M. D.”.

An application for separate incorporation was made by the trustee board of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church on October 2, 1907. When the legal papers were completed, the trustees of the Geiger Church met with the trustees of the Philadelphia First Church to conduct the formal transfer of the property. On February 18, 1909, the following persons from Philadelphia First Church made the transfer of property to the Geiger trustees: Mary S. Geiger, Frank N. Johnson, George W. Morrison, Isaac Hunsberger, A. Curtus Schofield, James A. Harley, Rowland C. Evans, Roland L. Howe and Charles A. Bame.

The charter of incorporation, dated November 27, 1908, included the names of the trustees as follows: Mary S. Geiger, Jacob T. Myers, Stephen S. Brownback, J. T. Swartz, William H. Bowman, David W. Hunsberger, Edwin T. Savidge, Edmund Kramer and Harry Kramer. Out of gratitude for this gift of property, the Geiger Memorial Brethren trustees passed the following resolution:

“Resolved that we the Board of Trustees of the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church hereby agree that in the acceptance of the title of the church and parsonage, we will never place any mortgage or encumbrance upon the said property.”<sup>6</sup>

The Geiger Memorial and Philadelphia First Church agreed on the boundary line between the two congregations. This line was set at the middle of Twenty-First Street, extending from the Germantown bound-

ary line to the southern portion of the city. As the Brethren enlarged their ministry to the entire city, this and other boundary lines were forgotten.

In the fall of 1908, while he was advancing his education at Crozer Theological Seminary, Arthur J. Culler (1883- ) assisted in the work at the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church and the new mission which was taking form in the Kensington district of the city. When failing health compelled Bro. J. T. Myers to resign his work at the Geiger Church, he retired in 1911 to a small farm within the bounds of the Green Tree congregation. He had been active in church work in the district for thirty-nine years at the time of his retirement.

Arthur J. Culler succeeded Bro. Myers. A native of Hartville, Ohio, Bro. Culler was the son of John and Amanda Kurtz Culler. He was a graduate of Juniata College (1908), Union Theological Seminary of New York City (1911) and, while he was pastor, completed his work for his Ph. D. degree at Columbia University (1912). He also attended Crozer Theological Seminary (1908) and studied in Europe during the summer of 1910. He was married to Mary S. Stover, daughter of Emory J. and Annie Stevens Stover, on September 28, 1911.

Bro. Culler ministered to the Geiger congregation from 1911 to 1914. In 1913, he spoke from the floor of Annual Conference, describing some of the ministries of the Geiger Church:

“There is a committee among the Christian Workers that is called the Pastor’s Aid, and that committee (can be) called for anything that I may ask them to do. We have also a committee that has charge of a work in a mission where services are held once per month. We have other Christian Workers who are doing work upon the boats, making comfort bags, putting into every bag such articles as a New Testament and other little things. These they take down to the boats and give them to the sailors, holding service on Sunday morning on these boats.”<sup>7</sup>

Bro. A. J. Culler also introduced membership instruction to new converts who were being received into the church. He said of these experiences,

“We passed thirty-six people into the Geiger Memorial Church. . . These converts were divided into two classes and. . . were instructed in the doctrines of the church. They were instructed in the doctrines of Jesus, the atonement, the symbols of the church, nonconformity, and the Bible as the revelation of God.”<sup>8</sup>

The pastor spent a large portion of the summer of 1914 in Europe. He completed his responsibilities at the Geiger Memorial Church in August, 1914, and became pastor of the McPherson Church of the Brethren (1914-1921) and professor at McPherson College, Kansas. In 1919, he volunteered his services to the work of the brotherhood Relief and Reconstruction Committee and represented the Church of the Brethren in relief work in Turkey (1919-1920). He withdrew from the Church of the Brethren on September 1, 1921, to become professor of New Testament and Church History in a college of the Christian

Church.

A. L. B. Martin (1866-1935) succeeded Bro. Culler as pastor of the Geiger Church. Born near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Bro. Martin was the manager of a department store for seventeen years in his home community. He was married to Ellen H. Heisey of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania in 1894. The Harrisburg Church of the Brethren called him to the office of deacon (1898) and then to the Christian ministry (1901). He soon gave up his business career and began to render full-time service to the church as an evangelist and pastor. Prior to his ministry in Philadelphia, he was pastor of the Long Beach Church in California (1911-1914).

When Bro. Martin was installed as pastor in 1914, one church reporter stated: "Already there are evidences of a great spiritual awakening."<sup>9</sup> Bro. Martin himself noted that he found 137 members in the congregation when he arrived, and some of them were inactive. Early in 1916, the membership increased to 204. In the course of the year 1915, eighty-nine persons were baptized and six were received by letters of transfer. Attendances at prayer meetings averaged fifty persons and the Christian Endeavor organization assumed new life.

On her eighty-eighth year, Mary S. Geiger attended a lovefeast and communion service in the Geiger congregation. George D. Kuns and Henry K. Garman officiated at this service on November 18, 1915. On December 15, 1915, Elders M. C. Swigart and L. R. Holsinger met with the church to advance A. L. B. Martin to the eldership. On this same evening, he was elected presiding elder of the congregation.

Evangelistic meetings were conducted with splendid results. Members of the immediate community were added to the church fellowship. Early in 1916, church workers made house-to-house canvasses to determine the religious status of the community and to win adults and children to the Sunday School.

Bro. Martin arranged to conclude his work in Philadelphia at the close of August, 1917. He moved to Baltimore, Maryland, to become pastor of the First Church of the Brethren in that city. The Geiger Memorial Church called W. F. Spidle to shepherd the membership. William Franklin Spidle (1856-1919) was born in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, the son of Milton and Jamima Brown Spidle, both of whom were members of the Episcopal denomination. Bro. Spidle had been a school teacher for thirty years in the public school system (1872-1902). He was married to Mary Grabill, the daughter of Joseph and Mary Wineland Grabill of Fredericksburg, Pennsylvania.

From the time he was called to the ministry by the Aughwick congregation (1902), Bro. Spidle was active as a minister and evangelist. When he began his ministry in Philadelphia on October 1, 1917, he shortly thereafter met with the official board to discuss such matters "as the best means of unifying and holding the membership together" and "the best means of evangelistic work, teachers' training classes and Sunday School organization."<sup>10</sup> Early in 1918, Bro. Spidle commented, "Our church at this place is gradually and, I feel

assuredly, allying itself more closely with the principles of the general brotherhood."<sup>11</sup> The Sunday School was averaging 230 in attendance and continued to show growth. The lovefeast and communion services averaged 130 persons in attendance.

Bro. Spidle's last preaching appointment was the Geiger Memorial Brethren Church (1917-1919). The city pastorate exhausted him and he was compelled to retire to Akron, Ohio, in order to regain his health. His death came on December 19, 1919, as the result of nervous exhaustion.

George Dilling Kuns (1877- ), former pastor of Philadelphia First Church (1914-1918), began to minister to the Lehigh Avenue congregation on April 22, 1918. Bro. Kuns was a native of Illinois but was called to the ministry at the McPherson Church of the Brethren in Kansas (1897). He married Elizabeth Mae Wieand of Wooster, Ohio, on December 25, 1902. Under Bro. Kuns' leadership the Geiger Church organized a Senior and Junior Sisters' Aid Society (1918). These organizations were active in contributing cash to aid the Armenian sufferers.

As the church demonstrated growth the membership was encouraged. "The church has been greatly built up. There is a continued increase of attendance and interest manifested", said a report of 1921. Eleven persons united with the church by baptism in this year.

Ernest S. Coffman came from the Harrisonburg Church of the Brethren, of Virginia, to provide pastoral services to the church. He ministered in Philadelphia for a year (March 1, 1924-1925) and resigned for reasons of health. Bro. Coffman was a successful evangelist who conducted a series of meetings in the church shortly after his arrival. During these meetings, delegations from the Ambler, Bethany, Calvary and First Church attended in body. The membership of the Geiger congregation declined in this period to less than a hundred members and the average Sunday School attendance was 160 persons.

For a year (1925-1926), A. B. Miller, a supply pastor of the Philadelphia First Church, ministered to the Geiger membership. One report said, "He is doing an excellent work here." In 1925, he conducted the Union Thanksgiving service with three hundred persons in attendance. E. T. Savidge, a member of the church, was active in promoting the Sunday School work.

When Bro. Miller accepted the pastorate of the Lewistown Church of the Brethren (1926), Quincy A. Holsopple accepted the pastorate. He and his wife, Kathren Royer Holsopple, were former missionaries to India. Before his arrival in Philadelphia, Bro. Holsopple ministered to the Plum Creek Church of Western Pennsylvania (1923-1926).

Work with young people received new emphasis during this period. On November 4, 1927, a district rally of Brethren youth met at the church under the direction of Nancy Keiper and Esther Swigart. A youth organization, under the direction of Harold J. Wollaver, took form. A report in January, 1928, stated that the church had an active roll of 272 youth with an average attendance of 225 each Sunday evening. Bro. Wollaver was given district responsibilities with youth in

recognition of his success in the Geiger Memorial Church.

The Geiger Memorial youth were active in rendering assistance to the needy. With the help of the church, the youth distributed fifty-eight baskets of food, clothing and toys to needy families in the community. They also raised funds to provide medical care for a sick baby. In this same period, the Ladies' Aid Society and the Ladies' Bible Class purchased a new sewing machine for Anna Hutchinson, a missionary to the China mission field.<sup>12</sup>

The congregation maintained a strong Sunday School program. The Home Department had a membership roll of thirty-five persons and the Cradle Roll had eighteen babies under the supervision of Mrs. G. Myers. The Girl Scouts met at the church with thirty-nine persons in attendance.

When Bro. Holsopple accepted the pastorate at Royersford, Pennsylvania the Geiger congregation was without a full-time pastor until 1929. C. Oren Garner, who was residing at Berwyn, Pennsylvania, assisted with the work as an interim-pastor (1928-1929). In the summer of 1929, John H. Clawson, a summer term student at Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, worked with the Geiger membership. In the meantime, the church placed an advertisement in the denominational paper:

"The Geiger Memorial Church of Philadelphia is without a permanent pastor and would like to communicate with ministers who might be interested. A full-time pastor around forty years of age with experience is desired. Write Edwin T. Savidge, 2812 N. Twenty-Third Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."<sup>13</sup>

The membership voted in 1929 to employ Norman W. Paullin to minister to the church. An active Baptist minister associated with the Eastern Baptist Seminary, he served as pastor until 1938. Shortly after Bro. Paullin began his ministry with the church, a member wrote, "The Lord has wonderfully blessed and strengthened the membership through the faithful and untiring efforts of the pastor."<sup>14</sup> The Geiger Church demonstrated remarkable growth, reaching a peak membership of 301 in 1938.

The church celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary on December 22-24, 1931. A memorial organ had been placed in the sanctuary on October 4, 1931, to honor Deborah Anne Werle, William Watson McKenzie and David Hunsberger, a deacon of the congregation.

Some concern was expressed to the Standing Committee of the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren concerning the practices of the Geiger Memorial Church. The report which came from the Standing Committee said,

"Since the present program of the Geiger Memorial Church seems to be carried on in harmony with the practice of the Church of the Brethren, we advise that all parties rest in Jesus Christ the issues involved, that no hasty steps be taken, but that we prayerfully wait

until we can see more clearly what is best for the Kingdom of God.

J. E. Miller, Standing Comm. Sec.

Anderson, Indiana, June 14, 1932.<sup>15</sup>

The congregation continued to grow. It observed the Eucharist, with the bread and cup, on a monthly basis---a custom which continues to the present time. Youth rallies were also observed monthly and regular Sunday evening preaching services were supported in good numbers. The church observed its fortieth anniversary on November 22-29, 1936. Early in 1938, Norman W. Paullin concluded his work in Philadelphia and accepted the pastorate of the Rosedale Baptist Church of Camden, New Jersey.

Joseph E. Whitacre (1898-1975), of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was installed as the new pastor on April 1, 1938. A native of West Virginia, and the son of Alphaeus Jerome and Lacy Abe Whitacre of Mineral County, he was pastor of the Uniontown Church of the Brethren (1922-1929) and the Harrisburg Church of the Brethren (1929-1938) prior to his ministry in Philadelphia. An early report of Bro. Whitacre's ministry in the city stated:

"Bro. Joseph E. Whitacre. . .was installed as pastor on April 1st. We have been enjoying his very fine, inspiring sermons and, since his short time in the pulpit, he has baptized seven. The congregation has given fine cooperation. One of the largest meetings we have ever had was experienced on Easter Sunday morning when the church auditorium was filled to its capacity.

"Our lovefeast was held on May 19th with Elder Ross D. Murphy officiating. Brethren G. N. Falkenstein, Nevin H. Zuck and H. S. Replogle, were guests of the pastor at the communion table. The attendance was large. Credit is also due to our pastor for the splendid Men's Bible Class he has built up."<sup>16</sup>

Bro. Whitacre devoted much of his strenuous ministry to evangelistic work. In the fall of 1938, cottage prayer meetings were held in private homes in preparation for evangelistic services at the church. The attendance at the prayer meetings and evangelistic meetings was excellent.

Joseph E. Whitacre resigned on April 1, 1940, and was succeeded in the pastorate by John R. Kilbert, a member of the Geiger congregation. On September 27, 1940, with Ross D. Murphy officiating, Bro. Kilbert was installed into the Christian ministry and was formally recognized as the pastor of his home congregation. Bro. Kilbert was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Kilbert, an established family of the church.

Shortly before he began his pastorate, Bro. Kilbert enlisted in the service of his country as a chaplain. He was called to service and was killed in action on October 26, 1944. An illuminated cross to the front of the church acknowledges the sacrifice he made.

A decline in the membership began in the period following World War II. The area about the church was surrounded by a black population. The white membership moved to the suburban fringes. On April 6, 1945, John T. Byler, formerly of Lehighton, Pennsylvania, was in-

stalled as pastor. Strongly evangelistic in his manner of preaching, he ministered to the congregation until the fall of 1946, at which time he moved to Louisville, Ohio.

Another licensed minister of the Baptist denomination, David C. Moss, was called and installed as pastor on January 31, 1947. He was called to the ministry by the First Baptist Church of Asbury Park, New Jersey, where he served as assistant minister from 1944-1947. On January 13, 1949, he was ordained to the ministry in the Church of the Brethren in a service at the Geiger Memorial Church. At the service of installation on January 31st, J. Grannum Mahon, Norman W. Paullin and Elmer Q. Gleim brought greetings from neighboring churches.

The congregation responded liberally to the work of renovating the stained-glass windows which had been placed in the sanctuary more than fifty years earlier. One of the great moments in the life of the membership came when, on Palm Sunday, 1952, sixteen persons were baptized as members. Many of these were young people who were making their commitment to Christian service.

On September 17, 1953, David C. Moss became a member of the Presbytery of Orange in New Jersey. He was succeeded in the pastorate at the Geiger Church by Orvel E. Hooker, a student at the Eastern Baptist Seminary of Philadelphia. Orvel and Helen Hooker were installed as pastor on January 29, 1954, in a service in the sanctuary. During his pastorate (1954-1958), the membership spent many hours discussing the future role and program of the church. The congregation continued to be a center for scouting activities and the ministry was strongly evangelistic in nature.

The Elders' Body of the North Atlantic District was confronted with the problem of the ordination of non-Brethren ministers. On February 11, 1956, when the District Ministerial Board debated the problem with the District Board, the District Board agreed that the Ministerial Board shall refuse "to install non-Brethren ministers as pastors of Brethren churches."<sup>17</sup>

On September 19, 1958, Donald N. Miller, a student of the Eastern Baptist Seminary and a member of the American Baptist Church, was installed as pastor of the Geiger Memorial Church. He was assisted in his ministry to the church by Luther J. Lutz and Anthony DiBenedetto, Jr., the youth minister of the congregation. On November 29, 1959, Harold Z. Bomberger, the Eastern Region executive secretary, was the guest speaker at the congregation's sixty-first anniversary observances.

The church had active Christian Endeavor Societies, a Wednesday evening prayer service, Bible study groups, Scouting programs, choir rehearsals and a Ladies' Aid Society. The Men's Work organization began a news publication called "The Geiger Guardian." A family night was conducted at the church each fourth Sunday of the month. Families prepared box lunches and remained after the meal for an evening vesper.

Edwin F. Moyer (1912- ) was installed as pastor of the Geiger Church on June 18, 1961 in a service conducted by John S. Landis and Lester M. Rosenberger. Bro. Moyer was received as a member of the Church of the Brethren from the Progressive Brethren denomination. He united with the Third Brethren Church of Philadelphia in 1920. In the period from 1941 to 1961, he was engaged in Biblical research in the field of exegesis. He was also associated with the printing industry. From 1938 to 1941, he was a missionary to Jews under the sponsorship of the Evangelization Society of Philadelphia, Inc.

A community in change made the traditional ministry difficult for the Geiger Church. Over several decades, the officials witnessed a declining membership. Edward Klein, a member of the trustee board of the church, approached the North Atlantic District Board to ask for guidance in determining the church's future. The District Board indicated a willingness to meet with the official board of the church to suggest possible courses of action.<sup>18</sup>



*Anthony Di Benedetto, Jr.*

When Pastor Moyer resigned, effective October 2, 1966, the congregation turned once more to its own membership for pastoral leadership. Anthony Di Benedetto, Jr. (1935- ), the son of Anthony and Louise Fortunato Di Benedetto, Sr., was a native of Philadelphia and an active worker in the Geiger Memorial Church. He was baptized in 1952 and ordained by the District Ministry Commission on November 15, 1962. He is a graduate of Eastern Baptist College and the Reformed Episcopal Seminary (B.D., 1974). On June 14, 1958, he married Joan Gibbs, of Philadelphia.

Bro. Di Benedetto was elected pastor of the congregation on May 18, 1967. A statement by the congregation at this time indicates the difficulties the church faced:

"We are typical of urban congregations that have interracial problems. We have noted that in Philadelphia the Germantown Church has been led to disband and the First Church has been led to relocate in a suburban area because of these problems. We are weak because of these problems.

"The members have voted to continue the ministry as long as we can in the present location. We are now the only white church that has elected to remain in the community. All other churches have relocated or disbanded or are in the process of doing so. Our witness is not too strong and effective in the community. There is concern as to how long we can survive."

The church observed its seventieth anniversary on Saturday, November 2, 1968. The membership and guests gathered for a catered meal and each guest was presented with an anniversary cake. Wilbur McNeel prepared a historical sketch of the congregation. Pastor Di Benedetto outlined a program for the rehabilitation of the Geiger Memorial Church and its program to the community. The membership adopted a program of building improvement, investing \$26,000 in a six-year period for the remodeling of the church and Sunday School units. On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary, new hymnals were placed in all the pews of the sanctuary.

Since its existence as an independent congregation, the Geiger Memorial Church has licensed, ordained or advanced in ministry the following brethren:

Jacob T. Myers. Advanced to the eldership, 1905.  
 A. L. B. Martin. Advanced to the eldership, December 15, 1915.  
 George Dilling Kuns. Advanced to the eldership, 1920.  
 John R. Kilbert. Ordained to the ministry, September 27, 1940.  
 David C. Moss. Ordained to the ministry, January 13, 1947.  
 Edwin F. Moyer. Ordained to the ministry, June 18, 1961.  
 Anthony Di Benedetto, Jr. Licensed to preach, April, 1962.

Ordained to the ministry, November 15, 1962.

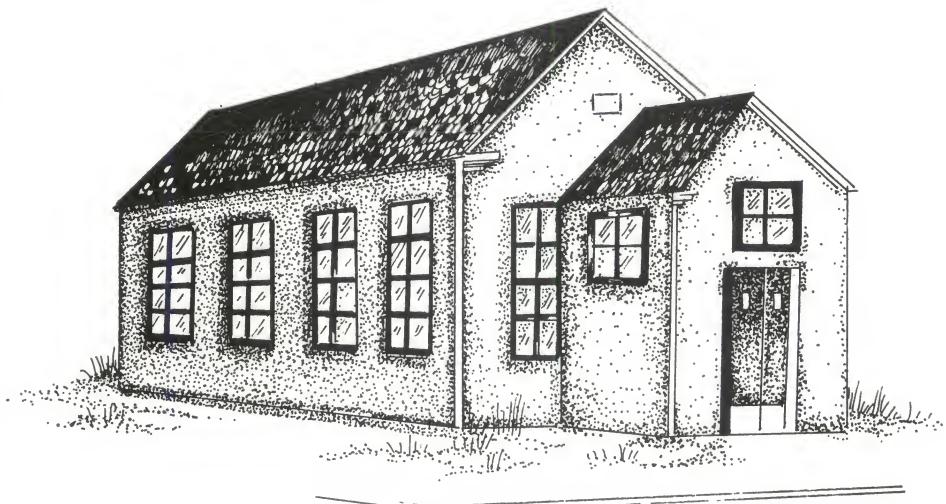
The following brethren have served as elders-in-charge or moderators of the congregation:

J. T. Myers, 1907-1915.  
 A. L. B. Martin, 1916-1918.  
 W. F. Spidle, 1919.  
 M. C. Swigart, 1920-1924.  
 H. K. Garman, 1925-1929.  
 Ross D. Murphy, 1930-1948.  
 Irwin S. Hoffer, 1949.  
 B. F. Waltz, 1950-1956.  
 Ivan C. Fetterman, 1957-1958.  
 John S. Landis, 1959-1970.

Edward J. Klein, 1971.  
Wilbur C. McNeel, 1972.  
Clayton Troxell, 1973.  
Edward J. Klein, 1974.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

## NORRISTOWN CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



After the Civil War, Brethren of the Mingo Church of the Brethren, near Royersford, developed an interest in home missions. The congregation began to provide preaching services and mission work to the Brethren who were already residing in the Norristown community. As early as 1869, a small mission building was constructed in Norristown on Barbadoes Street. Interest in mission work was renewed in 1896 when Elizabeth Grater became a mission worker in Norristown.

The Norristown meetinghouse was erected on Barbadoes Street above West Airy on a plot of ground donated by a staunch Presbyterian named William P. Cuthbertson. It is likely that John H. Umstad did the earliest preaching in the community, even before the meetinghouse was constructed. The small meetinghouse became one of the preaching centers for the Mingo ministers. For many years, Jesse C. Ziegler (1856-1918) was active in a preaching ministry to the Mingo, Upper Dublin and Norristown churches. When the Philadelphia Church was without a ministry, he ministered to this church as well. About the time the Norristown Church was organized, Bro. Ziegler "preached at Methatchon in the morning and at Norristown in the evening. This meant a drive of twenty-five miles."<sup>1</sup>

The Sunday School was held in Norristown in the afternoons. On April 4, 1897, the attendance at the school was twenty-eight persons and the offering was \$1.16. On September 3, 1900, a quarterly council meeting of the Mingo congregation met in Norristown with persons from Skippack, Mingo and Norristown in attendance.<sup>2</sup>

By the turn of the century, a sufficient number of Brethren were

living in the Norristown community to effect a separate organization. Elders Abram L. Grater of Mingo, Jacob Gottwals of Green Tree and W. S. Long of Philadelphia, convened a meeting on March 12, 1901, to organize the Norristown Church. At this time, twenty-one persons expressed their intentions to organize a new and separate congregation. The members declared themselves to be "The First German Baptist Brethren Church of Norristown", with Jacob Kopenhaver the church clerk, Emanuel C. Harley the church treasurer, and J. Howard Ellis the only deacon.<sup>3</sup> The congregation was recognized by an Annual Conference Committee in the fall of 1901.

William Mohler Howe (1867-1917) ministered as the first pastor of the congregation. He served as a mission worker as early as 1898 and, in 1902, the congregation employed him "with the understanding that he shall be at liberty to go to other points of labor as the Lord may direct him."<sup>4</sup> In his absence, guest ministers supplied the pulpit. On November 9, 1902, M. G. Brumbaugh was the guest of the church and spoke to "a well-filled house." At this meeting, an offering was taken in the amount of \$14.95 to aid the Brethren to build a churchhouse in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The Norristown Church made an attempt in 1902 to change the formula used by the Brethren in the anointing service (James 5). In order to stress the healing powers of the service rather than a preparatory service for death, the membership requested the Annual Conference through district meeting to modify the formula to read as follows:

"In harmony with thy expressed desires, thou art anointed with oil in the name of the Lord for the healing of thy disease, and that thou mayest be raised up and that thou mayest have the fullest assurance of the remission of all thy sins."<sup>5</sup>

The brotherhood was not ready for the change and the recommendation failed of adoption.

William M. Howe served as pastor from October 14, 1901 to October, 1902. He was released from his pastoral responsibilities to engage in evangelistic work.

When the congregation searched for a pastor, T. F. Imler (1851-1917), pastor of the Lancaster Church of the Brethren (1892-1902) and former business manager of the Elgin Publishing House (1902-1903), accepted the call of the church and began to minister in July, 1903. The Norristown Church agreed to pay his "rent and living to the extent of thirty dollars per month at least"<sup>6</sup> and a sister of the church offered him room and board free until he found a suitable home.

The pastoral years of Bro. Imler (1903-1907) in the Norristown congregation were stormy and controversial. One of the issues which created a crisis for the pastor was the action on his part of receiving members into the fellowship who were not in full conformity with the order of dress of the brotherhood. Individuals who wore gold, shaved the beard except for the mustache and, in the case of sisters, neglected to wear the prayer covering, were considered out of order by the

Annual Conference (1886).

In 1906, the pastor stated that there was a lack of uniformity among the churches concerning their adherence to these "Gospel requirements." Several sisters, from neighboring congregations, were refused admission to the church because they were unwilling to wear the prayer covering.<sup>7</sup>

The pastor was openly accused by the church of being more liberal in dealing with the question of order than the church had expected. He was told that he called on sisters to make public prayers when these sisters wore hats but no prayer coverings. He was accused of "making display at children's meetings, removing the pulpit, and having quartette singing by members and others that are very much out of order in dress, doing just like other popular churches in that respect."

The church showed evidence of growth in spite of these tensions. A report to the Eastern District meeting in 1906 showed that the lovefeast services average about one hundred in attendance and the Sunday School enrollment was 120. These signs of growth encouraged the congregation to request the right to solicit for building funds (1907) since "our present church house is quite inadequate for our town work and also greatly in need of repair."

Certificates of transfer were granted to the pastor and his wife at a church council meeting in July, 1907. For the next several years, the pulpit ministry was supplied by the elder-in-charge and guest ministers from the district. The church *Minutes* for these years discuss the placing of hooks on which to hang bonnets and hats (1908), the dismissal of a member who was involved in a crime (1909) and the expulsion and readmittance of a sister who publicly confessed to the sin of fornication (1910).

Elmer F. Nedrow (1879- ), a student of Elizabethtown College, was unanimously called to be pastor of the Norristown Church. Elected to the ministry at the County Line Church of Western Pennsylvania (March 31, 1906), he began his ministry in Norristown on April 1, 1910. With his wife, the former Hattie Myers, of Champion, Pennsylvania, and their two sons, he moved to the community in 1911 to serve the church in his second year at a salary of \$45 per month. At this same time, the church agreed to pay visiting evangelists at the rate of \$1.50 per day, plus expenses.

During his ministry (1910-1912), the Ladies' Aid Society was active in promoting relief to the local community. Members of the congregation donated food and money anonymously to be used for the care of the needy. "During the year (1911-1912), five orphan children have been rescued and have been given Christian homes."<sup>8</sup>

When Bro. Nedrow moved his family to Lake Ridge, New York, the congregation considered several pastoral candidates simultaneously. The Church *Minutes* revealed an unique method of selecting a pastor:

"The names of Edgar M. Detweiler of New Enterprise, Pa., and Elias B. Lefever of Groff's Store, Pa., were proposed. The first ballot was on the name of Bro. Detweiler and resulted in a tie between

'Yes' and 'No'. The question was finally settled by writing the word 'Yes' on one side of a paper and the word 'No' on the other side and dropping it to the floor. The paper being dropped fell with the word 'Yes' on top. It was decided that Bro. James B. Shisler should take up the matter with Bro. Detweiler and continue the correspondence as necessary toward securing a pastor."<sup>10</sup>

Edgar Marion Detweiler (1883-1969) became the pastor of the Norristown Church on August 1, 1912. A recent graduate of Juniata College (1912) he also served as the Sunday School secretary of the Middle District of Pennsylvania. He attended college in Philadelphia during the years he ministered in Norristown. The church paid him \$25 per month toward his support. Shortly after Bro. Detweiler arrived in the community, a service of baptism was held.

"In the afternoon of September 13, quite a company of members and friends crossed the Schuylkill River in boats to Barbadoes Island, where two young sisters were buried with Christ in baptism. The scene was very impressive and witnessed by a number of people for the first time."<sup>11</sup>

Abram L. Grater, who guided the congregation in its beginning years as moderator (1901-1906), died on November 14, 1912. Born at Limerick, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on September 12, 1845, he was active in the Church of the Brethren from his youth. He was called to the office of deacon (1880) and the ministry (1892) at the Malvern Church in Illinois. He was married to Hannah Spare in 1868, to which union seven sons and two daughters were born. After the death of his first wife in 1903, he married Mrs. Emma Gotwals (1906).

The Detweilers supplied a team ministry to the congregation. Mrs. Detweiler was the former Anna Grace Brumbaugh, daughter of Levi H. and Fannie Rhodes Brumbaugh. The Detweilers were married on July 30, 1913. In 1914, the average Sunday School attendance had increased to sixty-six, with \$276.48 collected in offerings from all departments for the year. The Poor Fund of the church was used liberally to meet the needs of the community.<sup>12</sup> The program of the church was decided by monthly members' meetings.

Although the Norristown Church was located within the geographical bounds of the North Atlantic District, the allegiance of the membership continued to focus on the Eastern District. Financial aid for the support of the mission work flowed from the Eastern District Mission Board and the church sent delegates to the Eastern District conferences. In 1914, the Norristown Church sent mission money to support the Lake Ridge Mission and the newly-created church in Shamokin.

When Bro. Detweiler completed his educational courses, the Norristown Church tried to persuade him to remain as the full-time pastor. In 1915, twenty-seven members were solicited for monthly support. Together they agreed to pay \$35.74 per month in support of a full-time pastoral program. Bro. Detweiler felt he could not continue as pastor for this proposed salary. On Sunday evening, June 30, 1915, he preached his farewell sermon to a house well-filled. "After three years

of service," wrote a correspondent, "we are loathe to part with Bro. and Sister Detweiler."<sup>13</sup>

For a brief span of time, George Brown Replogle (1894-1972) ministered as pastor. His interest in teaching led him away from the pastoral ministry. The church council appointed J. S. Grater, Frank Zimmerman, E. C. Harley, J. Howard Ellis and James B. Shisler as a committee to negotiate with a prospective pastor.

The pastoral committee recommended to the church the employment of George E. Yoder (1884-1972) as pastor. In April, 1916, he moved to Norristown to begin a successful pastorate. He was reared on a farm in Western Pennsylvania and followed farming and surveying from 1905-1909 and 1913-1916. He married Clara Beachy, a Mennonite lady from Sugar Creek, Ohio. Prior to his pastoral work in Norristown, Bro. Yoder was minister at the Summit Mills Church (1909-1913).

George E. Yoder was the only son of Emmanuel and Sarah Livengood Yoder of Elk Lick, Pennsylvania. He was called to the office of deacon (1905) and the ministry (1906) in the Elk Lick congregation. He was advanced to the eldership on April 7, 1912. When the Yoders arrived in Norristown, the church received their letters of membership and immediately elected him presiding elder of the congregation.

Bro. Yoder gave an encouraging report concerning his work at Norristown:

"When I came here last April to take up the work as pastor, there were but forty members on the church roll. Yet, they pledged themselves to support me and my family, which is no small proposition in a city. The membership is largely made up of people who are in life's struggles for the necessities of life."<sup>14</sup>

In March, 1917, church membership increased to sixty-four and the Sunday School enrollment reached 126. The total offerings for church and Sunday School amounted to nearly \$1,000.

The Norristown Church struggled with the problem of its location. When a vote to move to the North End of Norristown failed to win a majority vote in 1917, the trustees were authorized to make all necessary repairs on the existing building "as they in their judgment may deem necessary."<sup>15</sup> When the trustees reported the repairs would cost \$2,736.00, the congregation agreed to raise the sum.

On October 25, 1917, the Norristown Church of the Brethren was added to the roster of churches of the North Atlantic District. Members who associated with the Norristown Church came increasingly from the North Atlantic District and influenced the church's decision to change its affiliation.

During Bro. Yoder's pastorate, the Grater Missionary Class was organized (June 30, 1915) to promote home and foreign missions in the local congregation. In 1916, the congregation voted to permit women members to break bread and to pass the communion cup at the love-feast and communion services. For many years, women in the Church of the Brethren were not permitted to break bread to each other on the grounds that man was the head of woman and because it was a time-

honored practice of the Christian Church for officiating brethren to break the bread to sisters.<sup>16</sup>

Bro. Yoder decided to accept the pastorate of the New Enterprise Church of the Brethren in 1919. Before his resignation became effective on July 1, 1919, the congregation constructed an indoor baptistry and adopted a pledge of \$150 for Armenian relief.

Clarence George Hesse (1887-1972), a native of Grant County, West Virginia, and a student pastor of the Philadelphia Bethany Church, began his ministry in Norristown on August 5, 1919. Bro. Hesse was paid \$25 per week and was permitted to complete his education at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Late in 1919, a committee of five persons was appointed to purchase a building site at Wood and Pine Streets in Norristown with the expectation that the church would relocate. The Sunday School was growing and the need for additional space became urgent. The Sunday School enrollment in 1920 was 160 and the average attendance was 124. The *Church Directory* for the year 1919-1920 indicated a membership increase of twenty per cent.

Just prior to his graduation from Crozer Theological Seminary in 1920, C. G. Hesse received a call to become the first pastor of the Somerset Church of the Brethren in Western Pennsylvania. He began his work in Somerset on September 10, 1920. He was united in marriage to Myrtle L. Idleman on August 11, 1920.

Abram B. Replogle became the new pastor at the Norristown Church, beginning his ministry on September 5, 1920. He came from the Plum Creek Church of Western Pennsylvania. The church and Sunday School responded enthusiastically to Bro. Replogle's leadership. The October Rally Day had an attendance of 152 and the lovefeast and communion service had 127 communicants. Late in the year, the church changed its name to "The First Church of the Brethren, Norristown, Pennsylvania."

In the summer of 1921, the church conducted its first Daily Vacation Bible School during a two-week period in July. Sixty-four children were enrolled and the average attendance was forty-eight. Forty-four of the children were from Brethren homes. The cost for the entire school was \$11.55.<sup>17</sup>

In the period from June to September, 1922, a special committee solicited funds to construct a new church. The membership remained uncertain about its future location and the committee succeeded in collecting only \$130. Less than two years after the building lots were purchased, some members felt that "the outlook for a new church is not very bright at the present time. It seemed to be the feeling that money invested in the lots might be used to better advantage at some other place."<sup>18</sup>

Abram B. Replogle concluded his work in 1923. Paul Zuck, a student of Blue Ridge College in New Windsor, Maryland, arrived to minister to the congregation. Ross D. Murphy and George Kuns conducted a service of installation for the new pastor on August 5, 1923. Shortly after

his arrival, Bro. Zuck proposed that his work of visitation would be aided if the congregation would purchase a car for his use. For a time, the congregation regarded the request favorably. However, in October, 1923, the official board reported that undue hardships would be created in raising the \$300 needed for a new car. The request was denied.

Early in 1924, two separate votes were taken in council meetings to determine the future location of the church. The voting was almost equally divided on the issue, with a slightly larger percentage favoring the Barbadoes Street location. When the church decided to remain at its original site, the pastor submitted his resignation. He felt that the decision made was not in "the best interest for the future welfare of the church." The lots on Wood Street were sold for \$2500 and the congregation began to plan for the remodeling of the Barbadoes Street building.

The Norristown Church pastoral committee advertised for a new pastor. William M. Ulrich (1875-1948), a native of Huntingdon County, Indiana, and a former pastor of the Tyrone Church of the Brethren (1916-1917, 1918-1921), applied for the work. The church in council voted to call Bro. Ulrich and he began his ministry in Norristown on October 1, 1924. A short time afterward, a committee reported that a parsonage at 717 Haws Avenue had been purchased for \$7,000.

William Martin Ulrich, born near New Lancaster, Indiana, was called to the ministry at the Salamonie Church on March 7, 1903. He was ordained on August 4, 1918, at the Tyrone Church of the Brethren. He married Anna A. Adams of Indiana on June 16, 1900. Both Bro. and Sister Ulrich were students of Manchester College and Bro. Ulrich graduated from Juniata College (1923).

In May, 1925, the church council made the decision to remodel the Barbadoes Street building. All organizations of the church and Sunday School joined in the effort to raise funds for the renovations. By December, 1925, the remodeling project was sufficiently completed to permit the Sunday School use of it. On June 6, 1926, former pastor George E. Yoder returned to help the members in their dedication services. The estimated cost of the remodeling was \$5,690. The basement was enlarged, the main auditorium improved and an addition had been constructed to the front of the church.

With an improved building, the congregation assumed new life and attendances at the church and Sunday School increased. The Grater Missionary Class gave a new piano for use in the church services (1928). Mrs. Ulrich was active in Sunday School and Christian Endeavor work. Of the pastor, a member stated that he was "the best Bible student among the pastors of the town."

When Bro. Ulrich resigned, effective September 1, 1929, the congregation borrowed money to meet the deficit in the church treasury. On January 1, 1930, William J. Wadsworth, Jr. (1898-<sup>19</sup> ), of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, began to minister as the interim-pastor. Soon afterward, the church voted to call Bro. Wadsworth as the part-time pastor and an installation service was held on October 5, 1930. Bro. Wadsworth was

baptized in the Royersford Church (1913) and was called to the ministry at the Pottstown First Church of the Brethren (1925). In 1926, he was united in marriage to Emma Cashman.

Bro. Wadsworth served the Norristown Church during the years of the depression (1930-1935). In 1930, the congregation considered the purchase of the Pine Street Church, which was the property of the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church. The offer to buy was rejected by the Asbury members. In 1933, the Norristown Church denied a request from the Seventh Day Adventist Church to make regular use of the Norristown Church property on Saturday afternoons. In April, 1935, the congregation organized its first official board with J. S. Grater as chairman. This board consisted of the pastor, the deacons, trustees, the church secretary, the treasurer, the financial secretary and the church auditors.

One of the charter members of the Norristown Church, Emanuel C. Harley (1885-1935) passed away on June 9, 1933. He was the oldest son of Edwin and Hannah Cassel Harley. A long-time resident of the Norristown community and a groceryman, he united with the church in 1896. He was called to the office of deacon on March 12, 1901 and was superintendent of the Sunday School for many years.

The church faced difficulties in remaining financially solvent. Several references in the church *Minutes* refer to the paying of back salaries to the pastor and the sexton. When Bro. Wadsworth resigned in 1935, the congregation prepared resolutions of appreciation for the services of the pastor and his wife. The resignation became effective on September 30, 1935.

Once more a pastoral committee began to search for a full-time minister. The official board publicly stated its opinion that the church would benefit if it could "secure a man who would be interested especially in the young people of the church and Sunday School." The pulpit was supplied by visiting ministers until the summer of 1936, when the church voted to call its youngest pastor. W. Harold Row agreed to accept the call of the church on a part-time basis.

William Harold Row (1912-1971), the son of Golden Frank and Erma Yapple Row, was born at Junior, West Virginia. A graduate of Belington High School (1929) and Bridgewater College (1933), he attended Crozer Theological Seminary (1939) and the University of Pennsylvania (1939) during his pastorate in Norristown. He was married to Leona Myers Zigler of Broadway, Virginia, on September 12, 1934.

Under Bro. Row's leadership, the congregation displayed a new vitality. A membership class for church applicants was inaugurated in 1937. A newspaper account of the new pastor stated,

"There is a possibility that the Rev. Mr. Row might give up preaching when his studies are completed and enter the teaching of the Bible. He is greatly interested in Christian leadership and particularly the study of the Bible."<sup>20</sup>

Bro. Row was licensed to the ministry in the Valley River Church of the Brethren in West Virginia at the age of seventeen and was ordained

(1934) in the same congregation.

During his brief ministry to the Norristown people (1936-1939), W. Harold Row demonstrated the kind of vitality which was to characterize his later ministry to the entire brotherhood. When the Spanish Civil War wrought its devastation in the Iberian peninsula (1936-1939), he appointed Emma Cassel and J. H. Harley to accept offerings for victims of the war. Under his direction, the youth conducted services in the county prison. He was a director at Camp Stardust and worked regularly with youth in camping programs. He led the congregation in opposing the granting of a liquor license to a restaurant close to the church.

Very early in January, 1938, the Norristown congregation lost in death another active and loyal worker. John Spare Grater (1874-1938), son of Elder A. L. and Hannah Spare Grater, of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, resided in Norristown for thirty-seven years. During these years he was active in the church as a Sunday School superintendent, a deacon, a teacher and the chairman of the official board. Many people regarded him as the spiritual father of the church. The family presented a memorial piano to the church shortly after his death.

W. Harold and Leona Row closed their ministry at Norristown on September 1, 1939. "In their three years among us they endeared themselves to us by their earnestness and faithfulness to their work."<sup>21</sup> The Rows moved to Richmond, Virginia, to assume the pastoral leadership of the Church of the Brethren in that city (1939-1942).

Alvin Slotter Alderfer (1900- ) began to minister to the church in November, 1939. A native of Souderton, Pennsylvania, Bro. Alderfer was a school teacher in the Caernarvon High School of Morgantown, Pennsylvania (1932-1967). The Norristown Church was his first pastorate. He was baptized in the Huntingdon Church of the Brethren while he was a student at Juniata College (1932). He attended Temple University (1927-1929) in Philadelphia in preparation for his teaching career.

Bro. Alderfer was unanimously chosen to serve as the part-time pastor on March 6, 1940. On March 17th, he and Mrs. Alderfer observed their nineteenth wedding anniversary. In May, 1940, the new pastor and his family moved into the church parsonage.

The war-years (1940-1944) were busy with Brethren Service and relief ministries. Envelopes were used by the members to make monthly gifts to Civilian Public Service work. The Norristown area was well-known to many Brethren families who came to visit their sons who were serving as conscientious objectors in alternative service programs at the Norristown State Hospital. The Ladies' Aid Society was active in gathering relief goods and canned foods to be sent to the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Maryland.

Although members continued to entertain notions of relocating, the costs of a new location seem prohibitive. The young people of the congregation provided funds for an organ and the cost of an extension to the building large enough to house the organ. On April 11, 1943, the membership dedicated the organ with C. C. Ellis and Trostle P. Dick as

guest speakers. At this time, an appraisal of the Norristown property with its contents showed the value to be \$14,900.

When Bro. Alderfer moved to Parker Ford at the close of August, 1944, the congregation searched for a successor. For nine months, the congregation was without a resident minister. A. C. Miller, a retired minister of the district, gave leadership to the church in 1944-1945.

Jonathan F. King (1883-1962), a former pastor of the Allentown Church (1942-1945), ministered to the Norristown membership from June, 1945, until September 1, 1948. He prepared himself by attending Juniata College, Elizabethtown College and extension courses offered by Bethany Biblical Seminary. Bro. King was ordained to the ministry in the Richland congregation of Eastern Pennsylvania (August 16, 1919). For many years, he labored in the nonsalaried ministry of Eastern Pennsylvania. He was married to Mary Foutz of Germantown, Pennsylvania.

In 1945, the church membership redecorated the interior of the building and observed a mortgage-burning ceremony. Bro. King wrote about the Norristown Church at this time:

"The Church of the Brethren in Norristown, Pa., has an interesting historical record. It stands near to the newspaper offices which were originally founded by David Sower, the son of Christopher Sower II, in 1799. The church was built in 1869 from brick which was probably imported from England. Cement facing has protected the original wall up to the present time."<sup>22</sup>

Jonathan F. King directed the church under a full-time pastoral agreement. For a period of time, the church and Sunday School prospered. A parsonage, purchased in 1925, was paid completely in 1947. The church began to make regular monthly contributions to the brotherhood and other outreach ministries. The women of the congregation fostered a growing ministry on behalf of overseas and local relief. The entire membership participated in the district-sponsored project of sending Bibles-in-place-of-Bombs. In 1947, children of the Vacation Bible School made contributions toward the purchase of a heifer for overseas shipment.

Early in 1948, the membership granted their pastor the privilege of supplementing his pastoral income with other part-time work. Even with this concession, the financial pressures were too great. Bro. King submitted his resignation, effective September 1, 1948.

The next years were times of anxiety about the future of the church. On October 1, 1948, Lawrence E. Thomas moved from Brooklyn, New York, to assume the pastoral responsibilities. Mrs. Jewel Thomas was baptized at the church and was received by the right hand of fellowship by members on October 6, 1948. The pastor was given the privilege of attending the university to advance his formal education (1951). Bro. Thomas inaugurated a strong youth ministry in cooperation with the local Y. M. C. A.

The district conference, meeting in the Philadelphia Bethany Church in 1950, heeded the request of the District Mission Board to give finan-

cial aid to the Norristown Church. On the basis of a report made by Philip R. Markley, a survey was made of the community of Norristown in areas adjacent to the church and financial assistance was granted.

The congregation lost another active worker by death on January 28, 1951. Oliver K. Grimley (1891-1951), son of Oliver and Mary Grimley, had been active in the Norristown Church since 1943, when he transferred his membership from the Green Tree congregation. Bro. Grimley and his wife, the former Sarah Bechtel, were active in the office of deacon. He was a member of the Norristown Church pastoral committee and the first secretary of the District Men's Work Organization.

An increasing cost of living and the depressed financial state of the church led to Bro. Thomas' resignation on February 1, 1952. These were also times of dwindling membership rolls. Warren S. Kissinger and his wife ministered to the congregation in the summer of 1952. Other ministers were guests of the church until a new pastor was elected in the fall of 1953.



*Harold F. Keppen*

Harold Frederick Keppen (1918- ), son of Frank and Katie Dresser Keppen of upstate New York, began to minister to the congregation. He united with the Church of the Brethren at Pottstown, Pennsylvania, in 1951 and was called to the ordained ministry in 1952. Glen E. Norris, the moderator of the Norristown congregation, installed the new pastor into office on October 18, 1953.

Bro. Keppen worked as a mail clerk in the United States Post Office at Spring City, Pennsylvania. He resided in Spring City and drove to Norristown for his pastoral responsibilities. In 1954, the congregation sold its parsonage. From 1953 until the closing of the church in 1973, Bro. Keppen and his wife, the former Ruth M. Ryhert, ministered to the spiritual needs of the church.

In 1953, the Norristown Church was remodeled. A new addition was

made to the front of the building and the sanctuary was redecorated. To assist in paying for these improvements, the district gave the church \$2,000. One of the Sunday School classes purchased Brethren Hymnals for the worship services.

The Norristown Church was in a changing neighborhood. Occasional notices of vandalism and mischief appear in the Church *Minutes*. In order to formulate a program for itself, the congregation cooperated with the district in making a depth research study of the neighborhood. David Bevington, the assistant pastor of the Philadelphia First Church, was employed by the district in 1962 to survey the Norristown community adjacent to the church. This survey revealed that sixty families had some interest in maintaining the church on Barbadoes Street. With such encouragement, the pastor led an intensive program of visitation evangelism. The surveyed showed that 54.55 per cent of the neighborhood was Catholic in religious loyalty.

Records for the last decade of the congregation's existence reveal a declining membership and attendance. In 1972, the average church attendance was twelve persons out of a stated membership of twenty-five. The active members of the congregation, with the approval of the Commission on Ministry and Evangelism of the Atlantic Northeast District, made the decision to terminate the work in Norristown on Sunday, April 26, 1973.

The District Board also took action to acknowledge the dissolution of the Norristown Church of the Brethren. The Commission on Witness was responsible for the disposal of the property. The cash assets of the church were distributed among a number of institutions, including the Indian Creek Church, Bethany Theological Seminary, the Wilmington and the Paoli-Immanuel churches.

The closing service at the Norristown Church was conducted on August 26, 1973, at 3:00 P.M. Ralph R. Frey, a former moderator, brought the closing message. Harold Z. Bomberger, the district executive, led the assembled congregation in the "Litany of Decommissioning." The service concluded with these words:

"And now in grateful appreciation of the many years of useful service of this house as our spiritual home, we decommission this house as a formal place of worship that you, Lord, may establish a new witness to your kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

In the seventy-two years of its existence as a separate congregation, the Norristown Church advanced the following men to the ministry:

Clarence G. Hesse. Advanced to the eldership in 1919.

William J. Wadsworth, Jr. Advanced to the eldership, May 21, 1933.

Alvin S. Alderfer. Advanced to the eldership. June 27, 1943.

Harold S. Keppen. Advanced to the eldership, April 25, 1965.

The following district leaders and pastors have served as moderators of the Norristown congregation:

October 12, 1901 to January 8, 1906. Abram L. Grater.

January 8, 1906 to June 10, 1907. T. F. Imler.

July 5, 1907 to 1915. James B. Shisler.  
April 5, 1916 to 1920. George E. Yoder.  
April 9, 1921 to December, 1938. Milton C. Swigart.  
January 18, 1939 to 1946. Trostle P. Dick.  
1947-1948. Jonathan F. King.  
1949-1953. Glen E. Norris.  
1953-1966. Ralph R. Frey.  
1966-1973. Harold F. Keppen.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE BROOKLYN FIRST CHURCH

When the Church of the Brethren began mission work in the city of Brooklyn, there were more than a million people residing in the community. The years from 1890 to 1910 were times of rapid growth and change for this part of New York City. The first work by the Brethren was undertaken at the suggestion of several immigrant families who united with the Church of the Brethren in Sweden but later moved to America. The *History of the Church of the Brethren of Eastern Pennsylvania* credits T. T. Myers with the first services in the city.<sup>1</sup>

An early first-hand account of the work comes to us by way of a letter written by Emilia G. Strayer. She recalled that her mother, suddenly bereft of her husband, moved with a family of four children to Brooklyn in the hope of finding some means to support the family in this community. One day in 1896 a visitor appeared at the door, inviting the children to attend a Sunday School which was beginning in the neighborhood. The visitor was Alice J. Boone, and the calling card gave her address on 52nd Street between Second and Third Avenue.

Emilia Strayer continues the account:

"As far as I can remember, we three were the only children present. I do know the lesson was on Dorcas and it was my first introduction to a large picture chart. We were very much captivated by Sister Boone's charming personality. When she dismissed us, she gave us a note inviting us back to the preaching that afternoon. The afternoon found us back in her little living room. There were several adults present for the service. So started what was later to be organized into the First Church of the Brethren."

For several months, Christian Hope (1844-1899), a missionary to Denmark, assisted Alice Boone with the work. In 1897, the District Mission Board authorized Bro. Hope to spend some time in Brooklyn to inaugurate a work among the Swedish Brethren who emigrated to America. Again, Emilia G. Strayer recounts her story:

"The next impressive phase in my childhood memory was the coming of Bro. Christian Hope into our midst and my association with him. One of his methods to encourage people to come to church was to hold street meetings. Sister Boone would gather children and adults from the mission and, with Bro. Hope, would go to a street corner. There he would mount his 'soap box' and we would start to sing hymns. Naturally the curiosity of the people would be aroused and soon a crowd would gather. Then Bro. Hope would deliver his characteristically strong Bible message and would invite the audience to join in worship at the mission house. These meetings were usually held about an hour before the appointed time of worship."

The first Sunday School for the church was organized in Brooklyn in April, 1897. The church movement soon blossomed from the promising

work in Christian Education. T. T. Myers, of Philadelphia, visited Brooklyn, conducted several preaching services and baptized several young people. When Alice J. Boone withdrew from the work in the spring of 1899, J. Edson Ulery (1873-1959) and his wife assumed charge of the work. He once wrote, "I began work at the Brooklyn Mission at Third Avenue and Sixtieth Street on June 22, 1899, in a corner store building." The church was called "The Open Door Mission."

In February, 1900, Elizabeth Grater came to assist the Ulerys with the work. These were times of promise and growth. Missionaries on tour to foreign lands would frequently stop to fellowship with the Brooklyn Brethren and would share in lovefeast services before going overseas. In July, 1900, Bro. Ulery reported to *The Gospel Messenger* that eighteen persons attended the council meeting conducted by Elders G. S. Rairigh and J. P. Holsinger of Denton, Maryland.

The mission church, composed of ten members, was established on October 4, 1899. Elder George S. Rairigh (1854-1915) was elected presiding elder of the new congregation. In the preceding year, Bro. Rairigh baptized Agnes Trexiere, Jacob Trexiere and Martin Trexiere in the baptistry of a neighboring Baptist Church (March, 1898). J. G. Royer recalled that he visited the Brooklyn Mission in 1897 and "found the mission occupying two rooms in a private dwelling-house. On my first visit the lovefeast was held with thirteen communicants in the presence of a few women spectators."<sup>2</sup>

Failing health compelled J. Edson Ulery to retire from the work in 1901. J. Kurtz Miller (1865-1935) succeeded to the mission work on November 29, 1901. Born in Greencastle, Pennsylvania, on September 26, 1865, Bro. Miller united with the Church of the Brethren in 1877. He was elected to the ministry at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1891, and was in constant demand as an evangelist and Bible Conference leader.

When Bro. Miller arrived, he found a congregation of nearly thirty active, devoted workers. These were people of many nationalities---English, German, Danish, Norwegian and Italian. The prospects for the continuing growth of the congregation seemed excellent. In 1900, the Sunday School was averaging eighty persons and the need for a new church site and building seemed evident. The Brooklyn Mission was re-located in 1900 to 1393 Third Avenue. Because the term "Mission" seemed to present a barrier to some who might otherwise worship with them, the members decided to plan for a new church building. The need seemed urgent because "the rent is high, adding to our expense thirty dollars per month."<sup>3</sup>

Elizabeth Grater withdrew from the Sunday School and mission activities in the summer of 1902 and was succeeded by Elizabeth Howe (1902-1909). Born at Maitland, Pennsylvania, on April 20, 1857, the new mission worker was a graduate of Juniata College (1885) and a Chicago mission worker. In 1902, when she reported on some of her experiences in mission work at the Annual Conference, J. Kurtz Miller invited her to conduct similar ministries in Brooklyn. She accepted the challenge and, for the next seven years, devoted herself to effective and

successful work. She retired from the Brooklyn work in May, 1909, when she was married to John S. Brubaker of Virden, Illinois. She made her home in Illinois until the time of her death in 1936.

Bro. Miller was authorized by the Annual Conference (1902) to solicit funds for the construction of a new church building in Brooklyn. At the Harrisburg Conference, he presented a strong plea for steps toward the construction of a Missionary Home in Brooklyn. Bro. E. H. Eby and wife, of McPherson, Kansas, ministered to the Brooklyn membership in the absence of J. Kurtz Miller.<sup>4</sup>

The Brooklyn Mission ministered to the material and the spiritual needs of children and adults in the community. Many churches of the district sent money and clothing to be used to assist needy families. Children were sent to camps and country homes under support from the Fresh Air Fund.

By January 10, 1905, J. Kurtz Miller had solicited sufficient funds to enable the Mission Board to purchase a plot of ground for a new church building. A plot sixty-six feet by one hundred feet was secured at 352-56-58 Sixtieth Street for the sum of \$4,300 cash. By the time of the Springfield Annual Conference (1906), the pastor presented plans for a proposed new structure. Charles D. Bonsack, J. Kurtz Miller and M. B. Miller were appointed to act as a building committee. The Mission Board of the brotherhood approved the plans and ground was broken for the new Brooklyn Church on April 29, 1908. By November 29, 1908, a new building was dedicated debt-free. The total cost of the ground, church building and parsonage was given at \$29,300. An additional \$400 raised by the solicitation was given to the General Mission Board.

The Brooklyn Church developed out of the religious needs of Brethren who were attending the seminaries and universities of the New York City area. Some of the earlier Brethren held interests in business firms. Interested Brethren devoted themselves to mission programs until the church gained strength. A special note of 1904 stated:

“Agnes Jespersen, one of our young sisters of Brooklyn, returned home yesterday from a year’s schooling. She is preparing for the mission field and will be a worker with us during the vacation weeks.”<sup>5</sup>

L. Margaret Haas and Denise Hollinger were also among those who assisted in the mission program of the church in the beginning years.

The church was ably directed by ministers of the Church of the Brethren who had come to New York to advance their education. D. C. Reber (1872-1962) served as the treasurer of the church in 1901 and assisted in Sunday School work until June, 1902. He and his wife moved to the top flat of the Brooklyn Church of the Brethren while he completed his graduate studies at the New York University.<sup>6</sup> He was elected to the ministry at the Brooklyn First Church in the same year in which he received his degree of Doctor of Pedagogy (1902).

Another who assisted Bro. J. Kurtz Miller was William M. Howe (1867-1917), also a student at one of the New York City schools. He had come to New York to attend Dr. White’s Bible Training School.

The church elected the following persons to the ministry:

- 1899. J. E. Ulery ordained to the ministry.
- 1902. D. C. Reber elected to the ministry.
- 1903. J. Kurtz Miller advanced to the eldership.
- 1904. M. B. Miller elected to the ministry. Ordained to the full ministry in 1906 and advanced to the eldership in 1912.
- 1906. J. H. Hollinger elected to the ministry.
- 1906. D. W. Kurtz ordained to the ministry.
- 1907. John G. Caruso elected to the ministry.
- 1910. G. C. Myers ordained to the ministry.
- 1910. A. M. Dixon elected to the ministry.
- 1910. A. P. Geib elected to the ministry. Ordained to the full ministry in 1911.
- 1946. Lawrence E. Thomas ordained to the ministry.
- 1951. Frederick W. Dunn ordained to the ministry.
- 1952. William Gordon Churchill elected to the ministry.
- 1969. Stewart Beale ordained to the ministry.

Adjoining the church was a twelve-room Mission Home and parsonage. It was occupied and supervised by pastor and Mrs. Miller. The home was planned as a "gateway" for the foreign mission field. Here missionaries leaving from or returning to the foreign mission field found a temporary home. Friends and relatives of these missionaries often stayed for brief periods of time in the Mission Home. Rooms in the home were designated "Pennsylvania", "Ohio", "Maryland", "Virginia", "Indiana", "Iowa" or "Mount Morris Study" in recognition of the Sisters' Aid Societies which helped to furnish them.

When an independent district was created in 1911, the Brotherhood Mission Board transferred oversight of the Brooklyn First Church to the District Mission Board (May 31, 1912).

As young men moved into the Brooklyn area for educational programs, they were approached by the church to assume some of the preaching responsibilities. Amos P. Geib (1887-1959) spent the years from 1911 to 1915 in studies in New York City. During these years he also carried heavy preaching responsibilities at the congregation. Ordained to the eldership in 1915 in Brooklyn, he agreed to be responsible for the preaching and general management of the English mission church. The Sunday School had nearly 160 pupils and about forty adults attending the worship services. In addition, the church conducted industrial classes for nearly one hundred people. Many of the people who united with the congregation transferred their church letters. Till the close of 1914, 114 persons had united with the Brooklyn Church in this manner.

J. G. Royer (1838-1917) conducted evangelistic meetings in the First Church early in 1914. Occupied with school responsibilities for much of his life, he was able to give time to the work of the Church of the Brethren. When he conducted meetings he would walk many miles and visit in the homes of many people. He was always ready and able to speak to people about Christ at subway stations, on trains, in homes or hotels.

As a gifted speaker of the church, he was able to bring many people into fellowship with the Church of the Brethren. Through his efforts, and many others like him, the First Church in Brooklyn experienced a slow, steady "acorn growth." A report said of the Church:

"Just fourteen years ago the offerings were so meager that they did not pay for the supplies of the mission Sunday School. Up until January 1, 1915, our church records say that 314 persons have had membership with us."<sup>7</sup>

When A. P. Geib moved to Manheim, Pennsylvania, Walter Kahle succeeded him in the pastorate (1915-1917). On occasions, the pulpit would be supplied by H. C. Yingling, one of the resident ministers. During World War I, the practice of observing "Decision Days" was introduced to the congregation. One report stated: "More than thirty persons have taken a stand for Christ since January 1, 1917."<sup>8</sup> When an epidemic of infantile paralysis struck the nation in 1916, the Sunday School was closed to children for a period of time in 1916.

Oscar S. Miller ministered as pastor during the period in which the United States was involved in World War I (1917-1919). Bro. Miller's sister labored as the missionary to the neighborhood. This was a time of restricted food and fuel. A transportation crisis piled up goods along the wharfs of the Atlantic coast to await shipment. Many churches in New York conserved fuel by sharing common worship services. One finds a clue to the sufferings of the city residents in a special appeal which came to the brotherhood from the Brooklyn Church:

"On account of the high cost of living and the scarcity of fuel we get many calls for help here in the city. If any of the Ladies' Aid Societies feel like donating clothing or food, we could use either to good advantage."<sup>9</sup>

John S. Noffsinger (1887-1966), who was engaged in graduate study at Columbia University, became pastor in 1919 and ministered until 1923. From 1924 until 1927, he fellowshipped with the church as the moderator. In 1919, another appeal came from Bro. Noffsinger concerning the needs of the city residents:

"Special Notice: There is considerable suffering among the worthy poor on account of the high cost of living in that section of Brooklyn, New York, which is the field of the First Church of the Brethren. Clothing of all kinds can be wisely used at this time in assisting needy families. J. S. Noffsinger."<sup>10</sup>

The work in Brooklyn progressed and the decade of the Twenties was filled with hope. The Sisters' Aid Society of the local congregation was able to contribute useful sums of money to the church program. A Thanksgiving offering in 1921 amounted to \$80 and was contributed to the General Mission Board of the denomination. Mission study classes were organized in 1922. In 1925, J. S. Noffsinger was one of two Brethren selected to represent the Church of the Brethren at the Washington, D. C., Peace Conference. Bro. Noffsinger's interest in education brought him to responsible positions of leadership in the brotherhood. During the Twenties and Thirties he served as the Secre-

tary to the General Education Board of the denomination. In 1927, he moved to Washington, D. C., and became active in the Washington City Church.

Another student who ministered to the Brooklyn First Church was Franklin J. Byer (1884- ). Born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, he was baptized as a member of the Middle Creek congregation in his native county. The Lancaster Church of the Brethren called him to the ministry (1909) and advanced him to the second degree ministry in 1913. Prior to his residence in Brooklyn, Bro. Byer studied in Chicago, Illinois, at the Columbia College of Expression. During this period (1914-1918) he provided pastoral services to the Batavia Church of the Brethren. From 1918-1921, he was president of Hebron Seminary at Nokesville, Virginia. For a period of time, he taught at Elizabethtown College (1921-1924).

When Bro. Byer came to Columbia University to complete his requirements for a Master's degree, he ministered as pastor of the Brooklyn First Church (1924-1926). The membership was widely scattered throughout the New York area and services were largely confined to Sunday. Visiting speakers from the brotherhood were used frequently. A notation for January 13, 1924, stated, "A. C. Baugher, a student at Columbia University, preached on the theme, 'The More Excellent Way'."<sup>11</sup> When Bro. Byer completed his work at Columbia, he also relinquished his pastoral responsibilities at the First Church.

Several other students assisted John S. Noffsinger with the work of the church. H. S. Randolph preached briefly in the year 1923. Paul F. Bechtold, of Mount Morris, Illinois, provided the pastoral ministry in 1925 and 1926. Carman Cover Johnson, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, preached for the membership from April 5, 1926 until February 27, 1927, at which time illness forced his resignation.

Ephraim M. Hertzler (1896-1973), a native of Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, was called to preach at the First Church, beginning in July, 1927. He began his ministry as a supply pastor and continued his teaching career in general science in the Eastview Junior High School at White Plains, New York. When the church called him to full-time service, he resigned from his public school work. The years from 1927 to 1935 were years of genuine growth under Bro. Hertzler's leadership.

The new pastor had wide experience with life. He tended herds of cattle in 1903 in order to care for himself since his father died shortly after he was born. Bro. Hertzler worked as a gray iron moulder's apprentice for five cents an hour for one year, six cents an hour for a second year, and seven cents an hour for a third year (1908-1911). He worked for a foundry at Easton, Pennsylvania, and he plowed corn in Kansas. In 1922, he graduated from Elizabethtown College and entered the teaching profession. While he attended college, he married Rhoda Miller, of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

On November 27, 1927, the congregation observed its silver anniversary. The pastor tried to contact all members who had any association with the congregation in its twenty-five year history. Many of these

former members returned to renew acquaintances. J. Kurtz Miller and Fred MacPeck were among the guest speakers. Mrs. J. Kurtz Miller spoke to a fellowship supper concerning "Our Eighteen Years In Brooklyn."

In 1932, in the midst of the economic depression, the "Brooklyn Eagle" gave considerable space to the work of the Bay Ridge Church of the Brethren and the pastor, Ephraim M. Hertzler. The article said in part,

"As pastor of the local church he has been responsible for many innovations and has built up a strong church. He is particularly interested in the work of young people. Since coming to the church he has organized a men's club, a women's club, a Boy Scout Troop and has introduced athletics into church activities. He also introduced motion pictures as a means of entertainment and education."

Many new programs were developed to "keep young people off the city streets." During these difficult years of unemployment, the church became actively involved in caring for the unfortunate and needy. Bro. Hertzler would sometimes make as many as three trips each week to Lancaster County to bring food to needy families in Brooklyn.

Ephraim M. Hertzler submitted his resignation to the congregation early in 1934, but the congregation requested his continued ministry. He remained with the church until February 28, 1935. During the years he served as pastor he also attended Columbia University as a graduate student. From the Brooklyn First Church he moved to Windber, Pennsylvania, to assume the pastorate of the Church of the Brethren in Western Pennsylvania. Bro. Hertzler ministered as a fieldman for the National Reform Association (1945-1948) and held additional pastorates until his retirement in 1967. He passed from this life on August 29, 1973, at Clarion, Pennsylvania, after an extended illness.

Jesse D. Reber moved from a pastorate in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, to Brooklyn, to begin pastoral work on July 1, 1935. Aware that many Brethren were pursuing graduate studies in the New York area, Bro. Reber made efforts to contact these students to invite them to attend the First Church. The Sunday School continued to show vital growth during these years. Special efforts were directed toward training members in the basic beliefs of the Church of the Brethren. A manual prepared by Bro. Reber under the title, *Preparing For Church Membership*, was printed by the Brethren Press.

The poverty of the neighborhood was very apparent during Bro. Reber's pastorate (1935-1938). Although the community was heavily populated with a Catholic membership, the pastor made arrangements with some needy families to secure credit for them at a local food market. Bro. Reber personally guaranteed that he would pay any bills these families did not pay. "I never lost a penny", confided Bro. Reber to the editor of this volume. Poverty had become so great a concern that in 1940, New York City inaugurated a food stamp plan through the Department of Welfare.

Jesse Daniel Reber (1897- ), the son of Aaron C. and Ada King

Reber, was born in Denton, Maryland. He married Beulah K. Marvel of Chester, Maryland, on August 21, 1921. During the years they served in the Brooklyn pastorate, Mrs. Reber carried responsibilities for children's work in the district. Bro. Reber continued his educational program while he resided in Brooklyn. Here he began his work on a Ph. D. program (1935-1938). These were also years which prepared him for his work with the Pennsylvania Council of Churches (1947-1968) and with the Texas Council of Churches (1968-1969). He served as Associate Secretary of the Pennsylvania Council (1947-1953) and as General Secretary (1953-1968).

Jesse D. Reber resigned the Brooklyn pastorate in October, 1938, and moved to the Cleveland Heights Church of the Brethren in Ohio. In 1938, the Brooklyn First Church refused to sell its property to the Lutheran Church on Fourth Avenue. The Lutheran congregation hoped to convert the building into a recreation center. The Brooklyn membership secured the services of Robert B. Garber, who provided leadership from January 1, 1939 to October 3, 1943.

The next decade witnessed a succession of pastors as the church struggled with the problems of a mobile population and a changing community. Henry F. Kulp (1926- ), a former member of Philadelphia First Church, ministered to the church between October 3, 1943 and December, 1945. He was licensed to the ministry (December 9, 1942) and ordained (January 10, 1943) at the Philadelphia Church. A succession of supply pastors followed from December, 1945, until June, 1946. These included Glen E. Norris, Milton Robinson, Wendell Flory, R. D. Robinson, Irwin S. Hoffer, Charles M. Bieber and Frank Commando. On March 17, 1944, Oral Kintner was installed into the ministry by the church. Several years later, Bro. Kintner moved to Boston, Massachusetts. These were difficult years for the congregation as it experienced declining membership rolls.

Lawrence E. Thomas was called to be pastor of the church on April 7, 1946. B. F. Waltz conducted an impressive service of installation for the new pastor on June 14th. Bro. Thomas was formerly a member of the Middle District of Pennsylvania. He was licensed to the ministry (January, 1944) and ordained (May 5, 1946) by the Tyrone Church of the Brethren. During his ministry to the Brooklyn membership, he advanced his education at the Brooklyn College. On September 4, 1948, a correspondent from the church wrote, "Our pastor, Lawrence E. Thomas, has been called to the Norristown Church to begin pastoral duties there on October 1st."

These were years of difficult decision-making for the congregation. At a special council meeting conducted on October 15, 1948, three possible future courses of action were outlined for the church: 1). Close the church permanently; 2). Merge with the Calvary Church; or 3). Merge the Calvary congregation with the First Church. No final decision was reached at this meeting.<sup>12</sup>

The congregation employed Patrick Mitchell (1924- ) and an interim-minister in 1949-1950. He had been active as a youth leader in the

Brooklyn First Church and at a community center in Brooklyn. The congregation licensed (1947) and ordained (1949) him to the Christian ministry. He was married to Margaret Musto on December 21, 1947. At the time he was employed as minister, Bro. Mitchell was attending Shelton College and was an elementary school teacher.

In 1950, Frederick William Dunn (1907- ) was called from the Calvary Church membership to minister as pastor of the First Church. He was of German descent and had married Susie Caimano, a member of the Calvary congregation. Baptized at the South Brooklyn Gospel Church (1938), he was licensed (1950) and ordained (November 18, 1951) to the Christian ministry by the Church of the Brethren. In a personal letter to Moderator B. F. Waltz, Bro. Dunn commented, "As you know, I preach an old-fashioned Gospel." For the next seventeen years he ministered as pastor of the First Church in Brooklyn.

In the 1950s, the District Mission Board discussed the possibility of opening a new church in Long Island. This plan never materialized. Discussions of possible merger with the Calvary congregation were not seriously considered in the 1950s because the memberships had not been prepared for the change. In the meantime, numerous Pentecostal Puerto Rican groups became active in the community served by the First Church. A letter from Charles E. Zunkel, executive secretary to the Ministry and Home Mission Commission, to Robert L. Sherfy (December, 1957) stated:

"Last year, Fred Dunn, who is acting pastor of the First Church, requested the right to employ a Puerto Rican worker to assist the pastor, to turn the work in Brooklyn in that direction. . . ."

The congregation was unwilling to make the change. The membership continued to decline until, in 1965, it was thirty-nine and the average church attendance was thirty.

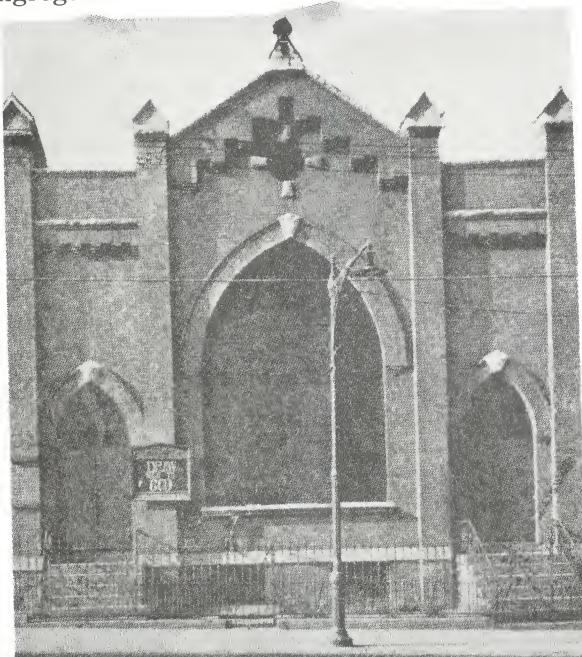
On the evening of May 24, 1952, a reunion of many former members of the congregation was conducted. Martin Trexiere, Edith L. Jensen and Agnes Marum arranged to have many former friends and members of the church together. The committee presented a brief account of the history of the church since its beginnings as a mission. Bro. Trexiere presented the names of many missionaries who were associated with the Brooklyn Church either on their way to the foreign field or on their return to America.

The church observed its fiftieth anniversary on November 16, 1958. Special leaflets, recounting the history of the church, were printed under the title, "Fifty Years To The Glory of God." Two former ministers, A. P. Geib and H. S. Randolph, returned to share in the celebration with the church.

In 1960, district boards and local church boards gave prolonged consideration to the future of the Brooklyn congregations. The possible merger of Calvary Church with the Brooklyn First Church was frequently discussed. James V. D'Amico, the Brooklyn Calvary pastor, indicated that the Calvary Church would gain by such a merger. The location, facilities and parking would be improved by the merger. Even

in 1960, however, the members were unprepared for this change.<sup>13</sup>

Roy S. Forney, the regional executive, labored with local pastoral boards to secure strong pastoral leadership for the congregation. M. R. Zigler was approached to consider the church as a pastorate. Bro. Zigler visited the congregation but the membership was not interested in a ministry by which he would serve as pastor of the Brethren in the Greater New York area. When Galen S. Young visited the congregation in 1966, he expressed to the church the possibility of merging the two Brooklyn congregations.



*Brooklyn First Church*

Eventually in May, 1967, the following notice went out to the members of the Brooklyn Calvary and the Brooklyn First Church:

“To All Members and Friends:--

For the past several years the First Church and the Calvary Church have from time to time discussed the possibility of merging the two churches but no action was taken. After prayerful consideration the official boards of both churches recommend to their congregations that a merger be consummated.

The sister churches, realizing the need for a greater witness in this changing area, unanimously agreed to merge the two congregations. Because of the loss of quite a few families moving to the suburbs and being replaced by a different class of people, the need was apparent for a stronger church to capture the hearts of people for the Lord Jesus Christ. . .”

The two congregations met in a merger service at the First Church of

the Brethren on May 21, 1967, at 4 P.M. Congregational business meetings were conducted separately prior to the service of worship. Joseph M. Long, Tri-District executive, read "A Statement of Merger." This program was followed by a lovefeast and communion service conducted in the name of the "First Church of the Brethren, Brooklyn." Pastor Frederick W. Dunn was elected to minister as the interim-pastor until a full-time pastor could be found. In 1967, the Memorial Baptist Church of Brooklyn invited Bro. Dunn to become its pastor.

Stewart Beale (1936- ), a Brooklyn resident who preached in the state of Florida, was called to minister to the First Church. The son of David and Ethel Morley Beale of Brooklyn, New York, he was ordained to the Christian ministry at the East Lake Baptist Church on June 8, 1959. Before accepting the Brooklyn pastorate, he ministered to the Salem Baptist Church (1959-1964), the East Thonotosassa Baptist Church (1964-1966) and the Pine Grove Baptist Church (1966-1967), all in the state of Florida. The Church of the Brethren ordained Bro. Beale to the ministry on April 15, 1969. Bro. Beale ministered to the First Church for a year and then returned to Florida.

On October 20, 1970, Elizabeth Maxwell, secretary to the First Church, submitted a request from the congregation to share in the proceeds of the sale of the Calvary Church building. The district board of the Atlantic Northeast District authorized the congregation to receive a forty per cent share in the proceeds on condition that the church would submit an itemized description of the improvements and repairs made to the church building. The *Minute* of October 24, 1970, states that the district board

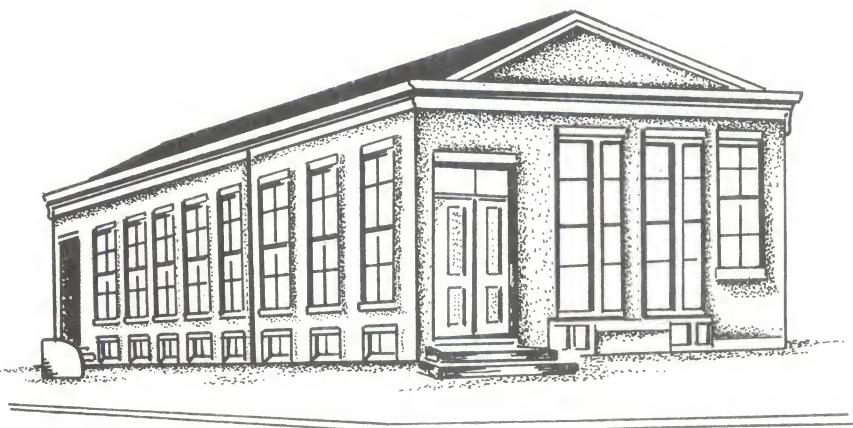
"voted to authorize the payment to the First Church, Brooklyn, the sum of \$5,087.88 immediately and \$100 per month for the balance of the payment upon the receipt of the mortgage payments."

Louis Carbone succeeded to the pastoral work in 1970 and ministered for a year and a half, at first as interim-pastor and then as full-time minister. At this time, the congregation had a membership of seventy and an average morning attendance of fifty-seven. Although the congregation had no installed pastor, the work was being conducted by Patrick Mitchell, Steve Miciagna and Robert DiSalvio, a lay member of the church.

Since its beginnings, the Brooklyn First Church has been directed by the following elders-in-charge and moderators:

- George S. Rairigh, 1899-1901.
- J. Kurtz Miller, 1902-1918.
- John S. Noffsinger, 1919-1927.
- E. M. Hertzler, 1928-1935.
- District Mission Board, 1936.
- Ross D. Murphy, 1937-1944.
- B. F. Waltz, 1945-1958.
- James V. Di'Amico, 1959-1960.
- John S. Landis, 1961-

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE  
BETHANY CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



*Bethany Church of the Brethren*

The Kensington district of Philadelphia, named for a section of London and founded by Anthony Palmer (1675-1749), developed into an industrialized area. The ship yard industries date from 1830 and the textile business from the same period. At the turn of the twentieth century, Kensington was the oldest working-class district of the city of Philadelphia. No less than 50,000 textile workers were busy with their trade. Many children were employed in factory work. Even till the present time, the Kensington neighborhoods are dominated by old stone and brick mills rising three and four stories above the narrow streets.

Samuel and Julia A. Croft came into this section of Philadelphia in 1904 to begin a Sunday School mission. Julia A. Croft was granted a special missionary certificate by the Philadelphia First Church on January 2, 1899, authorizing her to "give her time to missionary work." On June 12, 1904, Bro. and Sister Croft rented a three-story building at 3351 Kensington Avenue and opened a storeroom to the front as an auditorium for a mission Sunday School. As the school expanded, they opened their own living room for classes.

The first preaching services were begun on October 6, 1906. C. C. Ellis, later to be president of Juniata College, conducted the first services for a number of weeks. In the next four years (1906-1910), more than forty different ministers occupied the mission pulpit. The principal speakers included C. C. Ellis, G. B. M. Clouser, a Baptist minister, and C. D. Rischel, a minister of the Church of God.<sup>1</sup> From the very beginning, the ministry had a strong evangelistic emphasis.

The labors of the first workers were reassuring. A cornerstone for the

new church building was laid on November 17, 1907, at the southeast corner of Kensington Avenue and Willard Street, a block away from the original mission. The new building was completed and occupied on February 20, 1908. "The dedicatory services, conducted by Brother and Sister Croft, were rather privately observed."<sup>2</sup>

The work was so promising that a call was extended to Paul H. Bowman to become pastor (1910). The district granted the mission the right to organize as a church (December 9, 1910) and a committee, consisting of J. T. Myers, A. L. Grater and J. B. Shisler, formally organized the congregation on December 2, 1910.

Paul Haynes Bowman (1887-1964) gave pastoral leadership to the church from September 1, 1910 until July, 1913, on a part-time basis while he attended Crozer Theological Seminary and the University of Pennsylvania. After his graduation (1913, B. D., M. A.), he accepted full-time pastoral responsibilities at the Bethany Church (1913-1915). Bro. Bowman was the son of S. J. Bowman, a dentist of Washington County, Tennessee. He was called to the ministry by the Knob Creek congregation of Tennessee (June, 1910).

The early years of the Kensington congregation were prosperous and promising. In March, 1911, J. T. Myers presided at the first council meeting of the membership. The first lovefeast and communion service met in the same year with D. W. Kurtz presiding at the Maundy Thursday service. He was assisted by J. T. Myers, M. C. Swigart and Paul H. Bowman. The Sunday School, under the supervision of Sister Croft, showed increasing attendances. On Christmas Day, 1911, the attendance was 281. By 1912, a report for Christmas Sunday showed "a large crowd filling both our auditorium and the prayer meeting room."<sup>3</sup>

The first Decision Day in the Sunday School was observed on March 16, 1913. Sunday School scholars were asked to make "a calm, deliberate decision for Christ." One class of sixteen girls rose and came forward as their act of commitment to Christ. A reporter for the church said, "We feel that the Brethren have a great opportunity in this section of the city. The community is not overchurched and there is no need of the same churches to compete for the same scholars."<sup>4</sup>

Bro. Bowman returned from an August vacation in 1913 and delighted the congregation by introducing his bride. On August 12, 1913, he was married to Flora Hoover, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Hoover, of Timberville, Virginia.

"On their return, about 125 members were at the church to give them an informal reception. On the following afternoon, a junior reception was given by about 100 of the juniors who greeted Bro. and Sister Bowman."

The first regular Sunday morning preaching services began on October 5, 1913. Before this, preaching services were usually conducted in the evening. The church promoted a Sunday School, a teacher training class and regular Tuesday evening meetings for children. In December, 1913, four children were baptized at an impressive service before 160

children of the Tuesday evening meeting. During the regular Sunday School hour, Bro. Bowman taught a Bible Class whose enrollment reached 112 by the year 1915. In 1915, we hear the complaints common to a growing church:

“We need more room for our growing school and congregation but we cannot see where the money is to come from since our congregation is made up almost entirely of working people with large families and small wages.”<sup>6</sup>

The Bethany Church established the tradition of ministering to the community. In 1914, at a special Mothers’ Day service, men of the church went about the community in their automobiles to bring the aged and the invalids to the service. At Thanksgiving time in the same year, a donation was sponsored by the juniors of the Sunday School:

“One hundred children came with parcels of potatoes, apples, groceries, canned goods and other foodstuffs. Baskets were made up from these and a group of young women delivered them to poor families on Thanksgiving Day.”<sup>7</sup>

Paul H. Bowman was invited to deliver the baccalaureate sermon to the fifteenth graduating class of Blue Ridge College in Maryland (May, 1914). A short time afterward, he was invited to become the president of the college. He submitted his resignation to the Bethany Church and preached his farewell sermon on July 4, 1915. “At the close of the service, six young men and three young women were baptized.” Bro. Bowman wrote to the congregation on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, saying, “I still have a little brown address book which contains besides pastoral visits made, the names of 201 persons whom I baptized while serving at Bethany.”<sup>8</sup>

H. W. Rohrer succeeded Bro. Bowman as pastor, beginning his work on August 1, 1915. Bro. Rohrer served as field secretary of the District Mission Board in 1916 and succeeding years. He frequently observed that “our district affords the greatest opportunity for home missions of any district in the brotherhood.” During his pastorate (1915-1917), Bro. Rohrer baptized twenty persons in a period of eighteen months. A Sunday School Rally, held on September 26, 1915, had 578 persons present. “For lack of room, the men occupied the basement of the church while the rest of the school took their normal places upstairs.”<sup>9</sup>

Aubrey R. Coffman (1896-1970) and his wife, Carrie, ministered to the congregation from February 2, 1917, until June, 1917. In July, they moved to Elkton, Virginia, to await sailing orders for the India mission field. When these plans failed to develop, Bro. Coffman entered the pastoral and teaching ministry. While he was at the Bethany congregation, he was advanced to the second degree ministry at a service conducted in the Philadelphia First Church (May 30, 1917).

Clarence G. Hesse ministered to the church during the time he attended Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. Bro. Hesse, a native of Grant County, West Virginia, and a recent graduate of Bridgewater College, was installed as pastor on October 3, 1917. Clarence George Hesse (1887-1972) ministered to the congregation

during two eventful years (1917-1919).

The nation was at war. The congregation saw many of its members drafted into the armed forces of the country. A church note of 1917 described the state of mind in the church: "There are many sad hearts among us because some of our young brethren had to go to training camps and others probably will have to go soon."<sup>12</sup> By September, 1918, twenty-four men of the congregation were in the service of the country. At Christmas time, 1917, the church entertained a group of United States sailors from the Philadelphia Navy Yard at church services and in the homes of members.

In the several years Bro. Hesse ministered to the church, the congregation adopted a new constitution (July 15, 1918) and the name was changed to "Bethany Church of the Brethren." The congregation agreed to cooperate with the District Mission Board in reducing the indebtedness on the church property (1918). About this same time, Bro. Hesse introduced to the congregation the use of the stereoptican as a visual aid to Christian education (1918). He showed the work of the Red Cross in Europe during World War I.

When Bro. Hesse resigned in August, 1919, a correspondent said, "It is with deep regret that we lose Bro. Hesse as our pastor. He has been an ideal shepherd and will be especially missed by the young people of the church."<sup>13</sup> In the time he ministered to the church, seventy-four persons were baptized into church membership.

The church officials advertized through *The Gospel Messenger* for a new pastor "with a personal touch and a deep interest in this field." John W. Barwick (1899-1968), the son of H. M. Barwick of West Alexandria, Ohio, responded to the appeal and accepted the pastorate. His father, who died in 1908, had been the editor of a church paper called "The Inglenook." Bro. Barwick's mother and sister came to live with him in Philadelphia and were active in the life of the congregation. He once described the eighteen months he spent in Philadelphia "as the most vivid of any like period of my life" (1920-1921).

Pastor Barwick ministered to the congregation from January, 1920, until June, 1921. A Vacation Bible School in the summer of 1920 had an enrollment of 157. Bro. Barwick conducted a successful revival meeting in the fall of the year. A lovefeast and communion service at Thanksgiving had 110 persons present "on a very stormy night."

John W. Barwick became a Y. M. C. A. Secretary and spent much of the next four years (1921-1925) in Jerusalem and the Middle East. For more than forty years he directed church and voluntary agency programs abroad in the interests of the world's distressed people.

On August 7, 1921, the church board reported that it was in correspondence with Earl M. Bowman of Lawrence, Kansas. The congregation issued a call to Bro. Bowman and he began his services at the church on October 2, 1921, at the time of a Rally Day program. There were 265 persons present when the new pastor and his wife were introduced to the congregation. When the church extended a call to him, the membership had not seen or met him. The pastor preached at the

morning and evening services for the first time.

In the next four years, Bro. Bowman led the congregation through a series of growing experiences (1921-1925). A Daily Vacation Bible School in June and July, 1922, stressed "Bible stories, health and habit talks, crafts and outings."<sup>15</sup> The enrollment for the school was 100. The pastor gave special attention to children during the Sunday worship periods. In 1922, a Young Worshipper's League was formed, with the following stated purpose:

"A definite part in every Sunday morning service will be devoted to these children. They will sing a hymn and listen to a story or an object lesson, engage in Bible question contests and receive awards of honor."<sup>16</sup>

The church building proved inadequate for the increasing enrollments. A fund was established in 1920 to care for possible future expansion. The church finance committee invited individuals to subscribe to the Building Loan Shares which the church issued. Although the congregation was given district permission to solicit funds for a new building, the increasing building costs frustrated their plans.

The Young Peoples' Literary Society was both educational and social in nature. The programs in 1922 featured solos, quartet music, instrumental music and dramatic programs. A Mothers' and Daughters' Association was active in sponsoring special programs for parents and children. The church and Sunday School placed special stress on the formation of wholesome home life. In 1923, the pastor set aside a "Boy Day" in the church, pointing out to parents and teachers, the following:

"We should make a pal of a boy, give him the freedom of the home, so that, instead of going out for his pleasures and knowledge, he may be kept under the influence of the home and learn the things he should know in the proper way."<sup>17</sup>

In the years of its existence, the church has been fortunate to have a good music program with fine music directors. Under the leadership of James Andrews, the congregation formed choirs and quartettes. "The Bethany choir, composed of twenty-five young people, is fast acquiring a reputation for good music."<sup>18</sup> This tradition has continued to the present time.

One of the most successful evangelistic meetings in the history of the congregation was held from January 6 to 20, 1924. J. A. Robinson delivered instructive and straightforward sermons during this series of meetings. "He dealt sledge-hammer blows against every form of godlessness and unrighteousness."<sup>19</sup> One night of this evangelistic campaign was set aside for a Christian Endeavor Rally in a Presbyterian Church of the city. Bro. Robinson addressed this rally of more than 700 young people. As a result of these meetings, "there is now a better spirit of harmony and cooperation than has ever been known in all the history of the Bethany congregation."<sup>20</sup>

In 1924, Bro. Bowman distributed cards with the subjects of his sermons printed ten weeks in advance. He invited the youth of the church to write short essays on the same topics. A reward of one dollar per

Sunday was given to the best essay submitted on each subject.<sup>21</sup>

Earl M. Bowman submitted his resignation to take effect on June 1, 1925. He accepted the pastorate of the Washington, D. C., Church of the Brethren. During his pastorate at the Bethany Church he baptized 125 persons and made a host of friends in the community. Before he moved from the city, he was advanced to the eldership at a regular business meeting conducted by M. C. Swigart and Henry K. Garman (April 17, 1925).

Saylor G. Greyer visited the congregation from February 5 to 8, 1928. Bro. Greyer was from Ashland, Ohio, where he ministered in a pastorate. He ministered in Virginia as the first resident minister of the Buena Vista congregation (1908-1912) and gave much time to evangelistic preaching. The new pastor and his family were welcomed to the congregation on June 21, 1925. During his pastorate, the Sunday School grew so large that a balcony had to be added to the sanctuary to accommodate the attendances. Services of dedication for this new addition were conducted on April 3, 1927, with M. C. Swigart and H. K. Ober as guest speakers.

The church maintained an active Christian Endeavor organization. Robert L. Bennett attended the thirty-first International Christian Endeavor Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, and reported to the congregation concerning his experience (August, 1927).

The first issue of the church bulletion, *The Assistant Pastor*, was published in November, 1927, for distribution to members and friends of the church. Much personal work among children and the homes in the community kept the church's ministry vital. Pastor Greyer reported "4,200 pastoral visits, 400 sermons, 10 special anointings and 34 funerals" over a period of three and a half years.<sup>22</sup>

When he concluded his work at the Bethany Church in July, 1930, S. G. Greyer devoted himself to evangelistic work. On September 1, 1930, W. E. Buntain assumed the pastoral responsibilities. A Bethany Seminary graduate (1923), he had been pastor of the Naperville (Illinois) Church of the Brethren. Bro. Buntain worked with the Bethany members from 1930 until the fall of 1932, after which he entered the pastorate of the Oakland Church in California.

W. E. Buntain was pastor at the time of the congregation's twenty-fifth anniversary observance. On October 4, 1931, John W. Barwick spoke at a Rally Day on "Green But Growing." On October 11, 1931, Paul H. Bowman addressed the church on the themes, "I Am A Debtor" and "Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve." M. C. Swigart was guest of the Sunday School on October 11th.

The history of the Bethany congregation was given by J. W. Replogle with a series of lantern slides on the anniversary Sunday. A special *Directory* of the congregation was printed, containing the greetings, pictures and remarks of former pastors, and listing a memorial membership roll of the church since the beginnings of the congregation. The membership list contained 588 names of members who were associated with the church from 1906 until 1931. Included as members of the origi-

nal church were S. B. Croft, Julia A. Croft, Anna Moss, Joseph Kiedaisch, Elizabeth Crichten, William G. Angeny, Katie M. Angeny, James Andrews, John N. Gotwals, Robert Jones, Elizabeth Jones, Martha Hitchen and Frances Hitchen.

The church observed a church loyalty crusade during a series of Sundays in February and March, 1932. Each service carried a special emphasis, with a roll call Sunday, a family day, a neighbors' day, a stewardship Sunday and a new members' Sunday. An Every-Member Canvass accompanied the emphasis under the direction of a crusade director and the pastor.

When Bro. Buntain concluded his work, supply ministers came to the church from late in 1932 to the fall of 1933. In the spring of 1933, Frank E. Kates and Anthony Zeoli, an Italian evangelist, conducted evangelistic services at the church. There were eight conversions and many re-consecrations as a result of the meetings.

Earl M. Bowman returned to serve as pastor of the congregation on September 1, 1933. He completed a term as pastor of the Roanoke-Central Church of Virginia (1929-1932) and resigned his work when the congregation had difficulties meeting its expenses.<sup>23</sup> The Bethany congregation, on the other hand, showed growth and increasing interest during the depression years.

A report of the church's work during the economic depression states:

"We are glad to report an increased interest in our services here at Bethany. During the Lenten season evangelism was stressed, and a series of six cottage prayer meetings was held. As a result of these efforts, eighteen have been baptized and one awaits the rite. An unusually large attendance marked out Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, as well as the Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday services.

"At our spring business meeting, our pastor, Earl M. Bowman, was unanimously elected for another year. He is now conducting a series of studies in the Gospel of Matthew in the mid-week prayer services, Bro. Bowman also has a class of young boys and girls, members of our church, meeting Friday evenings. His aim is to teach them 'How To Be Christian'."<sup>24</sup>

In 1935, the congregation was strengthened by a series of fine preaching and lecture services. D. W. Kurtz delivered five lectures; W. R. McNutt, of Crozer Theological Seminary, spoke concerning the Bible; and Miles Murphy, professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, delivered a series of talks. In the closing months of the year, J. W. Replogle, William Hebbden and Harry E. Mahler were installed into the office of deacon.

On June 21, 1936, Pastor Bowman led the church in "A Wedding Bells Service." At this worship service, the pastor gave a rose to each June bride and to each of the women at whose wedding he had officiated. To each married couple, he gave a booklet entitled, *Six Tests of Marriage*.

Bro. Bowman accepted the pastorate of the Harrisonburg Church of the Brethren in Virginia (1937-1952). He was succeeded at the Bethany

congregation by Nevin H. Zuck, one of the youngest pastors the church has had. Bro. Zuck was a student pastor who combined his seminary courses with an active community ministry. He served the Bethany Church from September 1, 1937 until April, 1940, at which time he accepted the call to be pastor of the Ambler Church of the Brethren.

During Bro. Zuck's pastorate, the congregation observed the Sower Bicentennial (May 29, 1938) and observed the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the church in Kensington (June 18, 1939). Bro. Zuck recalled these years as the time in which the church ministered to the community by feeding the hungry, providing baby clinics for mothers and forming clubs for children. On December 14, 1938, a new class met under the direction of Estella Thomas met at the church under the sponsorship of the Progress Works Administration. Boys and girls between the ages of nine and fourteen years were taught arts and crafts.

Luke E. Ebersole, of Hershey, Pennsylvania, succeeded Bro. Zuck as student-pastor of the congregation. Elected to the ministry in the Spring Creek Church on March 9, 1938, he was pursuing graduate studies at Crozer Theological Seminary and the University of Pennsylvania. He was formally installed as pastor of the Bethany Church on October 16, 1940.

On August 25, 1940, Edward T. and Helen Buehl Angeny were guests of their home congregation. An impressive service of farewell was arranged for them as they prepared to sail for the China mission field under sponsorship of the Church of the Brethren. On August 28th, the church and district representatives extended best wishes to them at a service of recognition. Robert L. Bennett, Marion Jones, Margaret Mahler, J. Grannum Mahon and B. F. Waltz extended their prayers and wishes to the young people. Bro. Angeny had been called to the ministry on November 29, 1937, by the Bethany congregation.

On October 1, 1942, Elmer Q. Gleim (1917- ) succeeded Bro. Ebersole as the pastor of the Bethany Church. Also a student at Crozer Theological Seminary, Bro. Gleim worked with the youth and the children of the congregation. He and Mrs. Gleim, the former Ruth A. Rishel, of York, Pennsylvania, conducted a Daily Vacation Bible School in 1943. The pastor and his wife took seventeen boys and girls from the community to Camp Arcola in the district.

These were difficult years for the church. Many young men and women were involved in the service of their country during World War II. A group of women from the church met every Monday afternoon to pray for their sons and daughters in the service. The church dedicated an honor roll listing the names of those who were serving their country.

In May, 1944, Bro. Gleim accepted the call to become the assistant pastor of Philadelphia First Church. Supply ministers spoke from the Bethany pulpit until September, 1944.

Henry H. Moyer (1873- ) was installed as pastor of the Bethany Church on October 29, 1944. He had been elected to the ministry at Reading, Pennsylvania (June 17, 1912). Early in 1945, after Bro. Moyer was involved in a serious accident, John S. Landis was called to assist in

the work of the congregation. Bro. Moyer and Bro. Landis labored together as co-pastors until October 1, 1947, when John S. Landis was installed as pastor.



*John S. Landis and Marian V. Landis*

John Samuel Landis (1905- ), of Mennonite background, is the son of Simon B. and Alice Ebersole Landis of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He advanced his formal education at Eastern Mennonite College (1923-1924) and by correspondence courses from Moody Bible Institute, the Dallas Seminary and the Temple School of Theology (1947). Baptized in 1934, Bro. Landis was called to the ministry by the Germantown Church of the Brethren on April 3, 1939. His first sermon was preached at the Amwell Church of the Brethren. Bro. Landis is married to Marian V. Martin, of Gap, Pennsylvania (October 27, 1924).

One of the early objectives of the congregation during Bro. Landis' pastorate (1945- ) has been the complete renewal of the church facilities. In a series of stages, this renewal has proceeded across nearly thirty years. Special efforts were made at first to clear the church of all indebtedness (1946-1947). On November 30, 1947, an all-day program commemorated the burning of the church mortgage. In addition to the pastors, Bro. Landis and Bro. Moyer, speakers for this special day were Frank Kates and Thomas Kirkman. Bro. and Sister Croft sent a special letter of congratulations to the church to mark the occasion.

A new Hammond electric organ was dedicated at the morning service on December 10, 1946. The Mothers' and Daughters' Society sponsored annual musicals, using the offerings from these and other programs, to establish the organ fund. The Mothers' and Daughters' Society includes women of the community as well as members of the church.

The congregation's outreach ministry has been strong. Its mission interests have centered in the Angeny family, missionaries to China. On recommendations from the church's missionary committee, the congregation supported Carol Louise Angeny, daughter of Edward T. and Helen Buehl Angeny (1947). The church has also supported Louise Sewall, a Church of the Brethren missionary to Bulsar, India.

Regular contributions are made by the church to "Gateway" a drug rehabilitation center of South Philadelphia. "Teen Haven" receives regular support from the Harvest Home offerings and other offerings of the church. "Teen Haven" seeks to rehabilitate individuals in the ghettos of North Philadelphia. Since 1969, the church has been giving financial support to the work of Frank Mohr, Jr., a member of the congregation who promotes rescue mission activities in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The Bethany Church of the Brethren has been involved in community evangelistic services in a park near to the church. It has also been active in support of Brethren Service ministries. In 1948, the members shipped a heifer overseas for a needy farm family. In 1950, the Sunday School classes prepared a number of towel kits to be shipped to Europe. Members of the congregation have entered Brethren Volunteer Service. Dorothy Jones spent two years in Europe working in Geneva as secretary to M. R. Zigler (1948-1950). Bonnie Cervone spent two terms in Volunteer service: one of these as a worker in Puerto Rico, and a second term in England. Carol Shea worked with the Indians of Arizona on a volunteer basis.

Two members of the congregation were surprised with birthday anniversary socials. Frank Goyne, who observed his eighty-ninth birthday anniversary on January 9, 1949, was honored by the church. On February 13, 1949, a similar social was held for Mrs. Emil Peterson, who was eighty-four years of age.



*Bethany Church of the Brethren*

The period from 1948 to 1954 marked great improvements in the physical plant of the church. A renovated church sanctuary was dedicated on January 15, 1950, with Levi K. Ziegler and B. F. Waltz as guest speakers. The women of the congregation purchased venetian blinds for the church auditorium in 1951. In the summer of 1953, the men of the church laid a new floor in the sanctuary. New pews were then installed in time for a large fall lovefeast service.

Paul H. Bowman returned to share in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the church (June 11-13, 1954). Robert L. Bennett and Albert Mahler presided over several special Sunday School sessions. An impersonation of Bro. and Sister Croft was given to show how they worked with children in the beginning years. Various active organizations of the church were recognized: The Women's Bible Class, the Helping Hand Bible Class, the Loyal Temperance League, the Missionary Society and the Christian Endeavor Society.

Improvements to the exterior of the church plant were made, beginning in May, 1969. The original structure was refaced with white brick and the outer appearance was redesigned. A service for these \$20,000 improvements was held in the fall of 1969 with Stewart Beale, of Brooklyn, as the guest speaker. In 1971, new lighting fixtures and a suspended ceiling improved the interior of the church. These improvements were made at a cost of \$4,000.

The Bethany congregation has a history of community involvement and outreach. Many people who currently attend the services reside within the Kensington community. The Daily Vacation Bible School, the Youth Night, the monthly Mothers' and Daughters' meeting and the Men's Night have been directed toward community residents. The mobility of the city population has prevented the congregation from developing many second- and third-generation families in the church. Each generation represents a new start for the church. In spite of these deterrents associated with urban life, the church in 1974 had the following charter members: Louella V. Bartolett, John Miller, Elizabeth Jones, Anna Glessner. Two charter members, Robert L. Bennett and Katherine Bennett, were residing in Florida.

The following men have been called by the church to the ministry:

May 30, 1917. Aubrey R. Coffman ordained to the ministry.

April 17, 1925. Earl M. Bowman advanced to the eldership.

October 16, 1936. Edward T. Angeny licensed to the ministry.

Ordained on November 29, 1937.

October 16, 1936. Benson T. Replogle licensed to the ministry. Re-licensed on October 16, 1937.

February 10, 1948. John S. Landis advanced to the eldership.

January 15, 1950. Frank D. Gailbraith, Jr. licensed to the ministry.

1954. Bruce Bennett licensed to the ministry.

Elders-in-charge and moderators of the congregation have been:

1910-1915.--Jacob T. Myers.

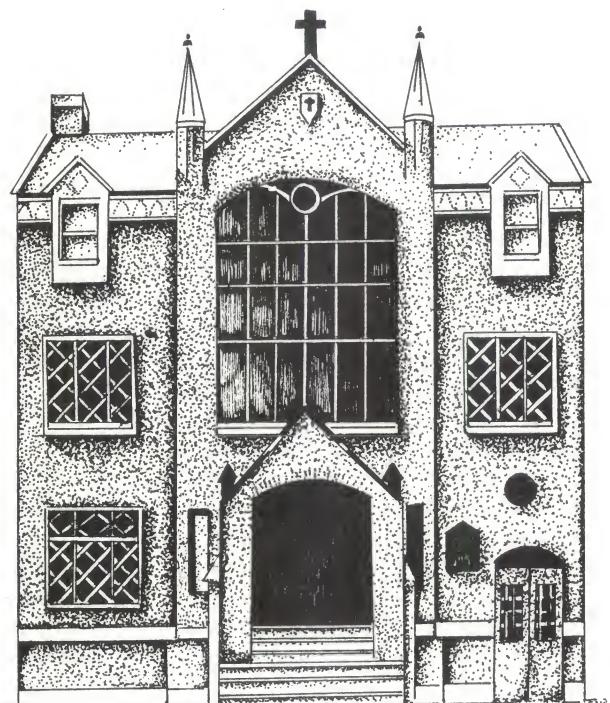
1916-1933.--Milton C. Swigart.

1934-1937.--Earl M. Bowman.

1938-1945.--Ross D. Murphy.  
1946-1947.--Henry H. Moyer.  
1948- --B. F. Waltz.  
1949- .--John S. Landis.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### THE BROOKLYN CALVARY CHURCH



*Italian Church of the Brethren*

Many Italian people fled from the terrible cholera epidemic of 1887. These people were attracted by the industrial centers of the East, where they formed themselves into chains of settlements along the Atlantic seaboard. One of the important centers where they developed ethnic communities was Brooklyn, New York. By 1913, immigration authorities for the United States reported that the greatest number of immigrants were arriving from Italy. One of these Italian immigrants was Giovanni (John) G. Caruso, a native of the province of Palermo, Italy, and the son of Salvatore and Rosa Caruso.

When he was twenty-five years of age, John G. Caruso went to North Africa to labor for three years. In 1889, he came to America, moving to Chicago, then to Philadelphia, and finally settling in Brooklyn. One summer Sunday morning, this man, whom children affectionately called "John", entered the mission room of the Church of the Brethren

at Third Avenue and Sixtieth Street. No one realized at the time that this was the man whom God called to become the founder of a ministry to the Italian people on behalf of the Church of the Brethren.<sup>1</sup>

John G. Caruso (1861-1923) had been invited by two missionary sisters to attend a mission service in the Church of the Brethren. He was handed a missionary tract by these workers. When he was told by some of his friends that these women were Protestant missionaries, he replied to his Catholic friends, "Well, I'm glad to have seen some of those devil worshippers." He had often been told that Catholics worship God and Protestants worship the devil. His curiosity aroused, he decided that he would see the devil for himself in a Protestant Church.

When this humble Italian laborer passed the open door of the Brethren Mission, he was attracted by the singing and by the appearance of the sisters in prayer veils. He decided to enter to see the devil. Later he told of his feelings, "How did I feel? Half scared, of course! But I had come to see the devil and I was not going to back down."<sup>2</sup> He was delighted with the cordial reception tendered to him and was deeply moved by the singing. He continued to return to the meeting room for worship and Bible study.

J. Edson Ulery (1873-1959) opened this mission into which John G. Caruso had come. Caruso requested a personal conference with Bro. Ulery and, soon thereafter, the two became close friends. "He requested that I teach him English, and I agreed that in return he should teach me 'Italiano'. Many were the evenings we spent together", recalled Bro. Ulery. In time, John Caruso moved into the storage room at the Ulery home and remained for about a year. He had an insatiable desire to know the Bible and wanted to learn as much as he could about the home-life of these people called "Brethren."<sup>3</sup> He later confessed that he had been kept in ignorance by his own religious communion. "My native land was made sacred by the footsteps of a great missionary. But I had to come to America even to learn that such a man as St. Paul ever lived, and that once he preached in Rome. . . And precious little did I ever hear about Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

John G. Caruso was baptized at the foot of Sixtieth Street in the Narrows in the year 1900. Frank Panescia was baptized in the year 1901. These were the first two Italians baptized into membership in the Church of the Brethren.

John Caruso married Anne Ruschenburg in 1902. Although he was a laborer earning a small income, he decided to use sixty dollars in his savings to rent a store room where he could begin the first Italian mission in the brotherhood. A report to the Harrisburg Annual Conference (1902) noted that Bro. Caruso, who was conducting a mission Sunday School among the Italians, suffered no small amount of persecution because of his persistent efforts to tell the story of Christ to his own countrymen. Two or three times all the front windows of the mission room were broken by resistant Catholic children and their parents. John never grew discouraged but would simply say, "If only they knew

the truth!"

The need for a church building became apparent. The Church of the Brethren called him to the ministry in 1907. Soon a nation-wide campaign was inaugurated to raise funds for a new church building in Brooklyn. The work grew steadily until, in 1915, thirty Italian Brethren had been baptized. A number of these were Bro. Caruso's relatives.

The work was expanded by continuing evangelistic campaigns. J. G. Royer visited the mission in February, 1914, and "the Italian mission was crowded to the walls" to hear this great leader of the church. In 1921, H. C. Early, chairman of the General Mission Board, paid a visit to the mission and conducted evangelistic services. A report of this meeting states:

"Our little band of Italian members has just enjoyed the largest meeting they ever had. A house-to-house canvass succeeded in getting many of the members and friends to the special meeting. . . Bro. Early preached to us in the power of the Spirit and his fatherly interest in the welfare of all was evident to every one in attendance. Our meetings are held in private homes for the present, but we are greatly in need of a larger place of worship. This we hope to secure in the near future, if arrangements to that end can be effected. John G. Caruso."<sup>5</sup>

Bro. Caruso provided exceptional Christian leadership in the Brooklyn community. This city was a business, industrial and residential center, crowded with factories and commercial establishments. With more than eight thousand Italians living in the city (1914), the challenges and opportunities were unlimited. J. Kurtz Miller, pastor of the Brooklyn First Church, related one of the problems Bro. Caruso faced and handled in a Christian spirit:

"One of Bro. John Caruso's enemies at the factory was ill in the hospital. Bro. John paid him a visit and it brought the man to tears. He said that not a soul from the factory came to see him save Bro. Caruso---the man whom he had misused. The man was frank to admit that Bro. John was a real Christian."<sup>6</sup>

In July, 1917, the first definite steps were taken toward building an Italian Mission Church. The District Mission Board met with the Italian Brethren in council and appointed the following people to a planning committee: J. Kurtz Miller, John G. Caruso, L. Avella, B. Rofena and J. Cooke. The committee and the District Mission Board proceeded to draw up plans for the first Italian Brethren Church in the world. H. Spencer Minnich published an appeal in the pages of *The Gospel Messenger*, seeking help for a church which had grown to an enrollment of forty-five in the heart of Brooklyn's "Little Italy." Soon other members of the denomination took up the appeal for help to give the Brooklyn Italian Church "new encouragement."<sup>8</sup>

In 1921, an Italian lovefeast service was conducted in the Italian language. For nearly twenty years the church had been meeting in a room which was twelve feet by twenty feet. In order to accommodate the wor-



*John G. Caruso*

shippers for this special occasion, the Brethren moved to a larger room nearby.

"I wish that some of our dear American brethren and sisters might have been with us and that they could have seen eleven Italian sisters and seventeen Italian brethren at the Lord's tables. . . ."

The advancing years of Bro. Caruso required that he seek help in conducting the mission work. Frederick MacPeck, residing close to the community, was asked to assist with the preaching services and the Sunday School work. He cooperated with Bro. Caruso, content to remain in the background, but all the while maintaining a deep loyalty to the Italian Church. In time, Bro. Caruso brought the church to the realization of its dream for a new church house. Unfortunately, Bro. Caruso, like Moses before the Promised Land, did not live to see his dream become reality, for he was stricken with a stomach ailment from which he did not recover.

In 1923, Giovanni Allegri assumed the reins of responsibility for the work begun by Bro. Caruso. He was born in Bassignana near Alessandria, Italy, of Catholic parentage. When he was three years of age, however, his parents were converted to Protestantism. Bro. Allegri (1866-1949) received a complete training in classical studies in Genova, Italy, and took a regular course in theology at the Chiesa Liberal Seminary in Rome. At the age of sixteen, he preached his first sermon. He was ordained in 1890 by the Presbyterian Church of Florence, Italy, and also ministered on behalf of the Italian Baptist Church.

At the age of thirty-four, the New World attracted him and he accepted a professorship in Latin, Hebrew and Greek at the Colgate Universi-

ty Center in New York City. Beginning in 1906, he ministered to Italians in the city of Trenton, New Jersey, Providence, Rhode Island, Camden, New Jersey and New York City, New York. When the University Center of New York City closed, he devoted himself to full-time pastoral work.



*John Allegri*

For nearly twenty-two years, professor and Mrs. Allegri served the Italian Church of the Brethren in Brooklyn (1923-1945). At the time he began his ministry to the Italian Brethren, he had not been received into the fellowship of the Church of the Brethren. On September 10, 1923, he made a visit to the Germantown Church of the Brethren as guest of the congregation. On this day, he and his wife were received by baptism in a special service conducted by M. C. Swigart. Sister Allegri was a Roman Catholic who once had plans to become a nun.<sup>10</sup>

John Allegri was the first pastor of the new church at 266 20th Street. A new brick building was completed in January, 1926 and the church began to use it for services. Many individuals and Sunday Schools of the brotherhood contributed to make the church a reality. Services of dedication were held on Sunday, November 14, 1926. The cost of the building was given at \$50,630.46. The new church was located in a section of Brooklyn where, on a summer's evening, the streets teemed with people walking in the out-of-doors for a breath of fresh air. It was a neighborhood of working-class people.

On April 28, 1927, the District Mission Board shocked the District Meeting delegates by reporting that the Brooklyn Italian Church was not exempt from taxes because it was listed as a foreign corporation. Immediate steps were taken to file incorporation papers in Albany, New York, and the district paid taxes amounting to \$1,360. The original in-

corporators for the church were John C. Dettra, Milton C. Swigart and Giovanni Allegri. A certificate of incorporation was filed on August 10, 1927.

The Allegri family was talented and provided unusual leadership to the growing mission church. Bro. Allegri was gifted with language skills and could read Hebrew, Greek, Italian, Spanish and English. His wife was gifted in speaking and teaching. The daughter, Lydia, was musically inclined, as was the son. The Allegri family was assisted for a time in their work by Orlena Wolgemuth, an English-speaking mission worker.



*Laura E. Moyer*

In 1931, Laura E. Moyer began her work as an English-speaking missionary and church worker. In these beginning years, Sister Moyer was supported by the East Petersburg Church of the Brethren of Eastern Pennsylvania. Her work consisted chiefly of visitation among the absentee children, the sick, the hospitalized and any new families in the neighborhood. Gradually her apartment over the pulpit area in the church became the meeting place for young people on Sunday afternoons. An informal atmosphere prevailed wherever she went. Periods of social fellowship and conversation were common. In time, many new forms of meetings evolved: Girl Scout Troops, Released Time Christian Education, picnics at the park, Home Nursery classes, choir rehearsals, English-speaking Bible classes in addition to the prayer meetings and Sunday services.

Street meetings were rather common forms of evangelism. These were conducted in both the Italian and English languages. "We carried a hand organ with us", said Laura Moyer. "Meetings were held in front of the church building. We would invite people to attend church. In those days, people were hungry for the gospel and ventured into the church. They sat in the back, afraid that they might be doing wrong by

listening to a Protestant service. After coming a few times, many accepted the Lord and were baptized.<sup>11</sup> For several years there were Italian radio services, but the expenses for this kind of ministry were too great. Over the years, the congregation grew gradually, reaching a top membership of ninety-six during Bro. Allegri's pastorate.

On October 11, 1935, the pastor and his wife celebrated their forty-sixth year in the ordained ministry. The women of the church prepared a good Italian dinner for the occasion. "Following the dinner came a message by the pastor himself. His face portrayed his emotions, for he was deeply moved by the honor and the respect shown to him by the congregation."<sup>12</sup>

In his later years, Bro. Allegri's eyesight began to fail. His wife died and his children moved from the neighborhood. On November 30, 1945, he retired to the Brethren Home at Neffsville, Pennsylvania. He passed from this life on January 25, 1950, at the age of eighty-three years, shortly after he offered a testimony at a prayer meeting. The church lost a profound scholar and wise pastor at his passing.

A new pastor was called from the congregation's membership. John Musto (1945-1950) was acquainted with the Italian language and was fluent in the English language. Born of Catholic parentage in Brooklyn on December 24, 1908, he was converted to Christianity in 1930 as the result of an experience he had at a barber shop. He met a Christian barber who explained to him the Christian gospel for the first time and handed him a Bible as a gift. When Bro. Musto began to read, he discovered a world to which he had hitherto been blind. While reading a passage of Scripture in a subway station, he suddenly felt the imperative of the words: "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." These words brought the message he needed and he responded with a changed life. His normal life of visiting speak-easies and race tracks could no longer satisfy.

For a time, his wife Sarah, whom he married in 1927, was opposed to his coming to the Italian Mission. Laura Moyer made many visits to the home and finally convinced her to attend with her husband. She came in fear and trembling. In time, she and the entire family united with the church. Steven Musto, the son, became associated with the Billy Graham Crusades and recorded a number of songs. Margaret Musto, the daughter, married Patrick Mitchell, who became a part-time pastor of the First Church in Brooklyn.

John Musto was elected pastor of the Italian Church on May 29, 1945, and was installed as pastor on November 18, 1945. On December 9th of the same year, B. F. Waltz visited the church and installed six newly-elected deacons into office and conducted the first lovefeast service in the church building. Laura Moyer described the occasion:

"I can remember the first time the women washed feet. Many burst out crying: they were so touched in following the commandment in John's Gospel. It really had meaning to their lives in following the Master's commandment. Ever since then, we have had the

lovefeast twice each year.''<sup>13</sup>

The Brooklyn Italian Church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in October, 1948. The complete week of October 25-31 was set aside as a time for prayers and the observance of the anniversary. Emphasis was placed on missions, Brethren Service, Brethren Beliefs and Practices and the Ideals and Heritage of the Church of the Brethren. In this same year, the congregation received a new name. The District Conference authorized the church to change its name to "The Calvary Church of the Brethren", effective January 1, 1948. During its week of celebration, the church recalled its founder by unveiling a tablet in memory of John G. Caruso.

In the 1940s, there were many exchanges between the Italian Church and other churches of the North Atlantic District. In 1941, thirty ladies from the Green Tree Church visited the Calvary Church membership. Earlier in this year, youth from the Calvary Church visited the Germantown congregation to render a special program for the worshippers. Whenever visiting Brethren groups came to Brooklyn, members of the mission served them meals and provided a sight-seeing tour throughout the city. In 1946, in order to convey to the Calvary membership, the friendship and brotherhood of the district, Brethren William G. Nyce and Harper M. Snavely visited the congregation.

As the Calvary Church emerged from a mission center to a church, more structure was needed and more leadership was required. In the quarter of a century from 1940 until 1965, many young men were called to the ministry. These include:

John H. Musto. Licensed March 17, 1944. Advanced to the ministry on February 22, 1945 and ordained as an elder on February 22, 1948.

Frederick W. Dunn. Licensed on March 17, 1944 and advanced to the full ministry on February 22, 1945.

James V. D'Amico. Licensed on March 17, 1944. Advanced to the full ministry on September 4, 1949; and advanced to the eldership on February 22, 1957.

Frank Commando. Licensed on February 22, 1946.

Louis Carbone. Licensed on December 7, 1947.

Patrick Mitchell. Licensed on December 7, 1947 and ordained to the full ministry on February 22, 1949.

Lorenzo De Maio. Licensed on February 22, 1948.

Jo Del Pino. Licensed on August 17, 1952.

Charles Lo Prinzi. Licensed on February 22, 1957 and ordained on February 21, 1960.

About the time that Bro. Musto became pastor of the church, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ottaviano transferred their letters of membership from the Baptist denomination. Bro. Ottaviano was a native of Italy, born there on August 18, 1898, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Ottaviano. On September 13, 1924, he was united in marriage to Jennie Scarlata of Brooklyn, New York. He labored as a deacon in the Brooklyn Italian Church and shortly thereafter, as an ordained minister. For

some years he conducted the Italian services at the church. Frank Ottaviano died on January 25, 1973.

Louis Carbone was called on August 17, 1952, to succeed Bro. Musto in the pastorate. He was working with the church as early as 1951 and was asked to continue as the interim-pastor. Bro. Carbone was an earnest young man who had been converted to the Christian faith and was ordained at the Calvary Church. By 1953, the congregation reached a membership of 118 persons.

The growing church continued its search for a full-time minister. On November 6, 1954, it called one of its own sons from the Philadelphia Calvary congregation to direct the work in Brooklyn. James V. D'Amico, the son of John and Rose D'Amico of Deer Park, New York, returned to the community he knew so well. His family moved into the Brooklyn area in 1925 and associated themselves with the Italian Church in the 1930s. James completed his High School work and entered the Bible Institute of New York City for additional schooling. During this period of time, he operated an elevator and cleaned the Calvary Church in preparation for its services. In addition, he took specialized courses in airconditioning.

James Vincent D'Amico (1924- ) married Grace Petrone, the daughter of Frank and Anna Petrone (August 30, 1947). Sensing the need for advanced schooling, he attended Juniata College (1947-1949) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (1949-1952). He made the decision to attend Brethren schools much against the wishes of some of his Fundamentalist teachers at the Bible Institute in New York. He wrote about his experience in Brethren schools:

"At Bethany Seminary, I found the faith of men like Calvert N. Ellis, William M. Beahm, Floyd E. Mallott and the late Rufus D. Bowman ever so much deeper and richer than that of my former teachers who had criticized them."<sup>14</sup>

The years of Bro. D'Amico's pastorate (1954-1961) were exciting, growing years for the church. Laura Moyer continued with her visitation work and conducted midweek activities for nearly 120 children. Frank Ottaviano conducted complete services in Italian for the non-English speaking people. Louis Carbone, a maintenance worker, and Charles Lo Prinzi, an egg-merchant, ministered as associate pastors to Bro. D'Amico. Volunteer staff members conducted other phases of the church and Sunday School program.

Street-corner preaching continued to be a popular method of presenting the Christian gospel to the community. Bro. D'Amico once commented that as many as thirty or forty people would gather on a Saturday evening at a busy street corner in front of a bank to hear the Christian gospel preached. Church members would take five or six musical instruments to accompany the singing of hymns and soon a crowd would gather. If the crowd became large, a policeman would stand nearby to insure order. Personal testimonies were given and tracts were distributed. Personal invitations were given to individuals to attend the church services.

In 1958, on the occasion of the church's annual home-coming service, a special recognition was tendered to Laura E. Moyer for twenty-seven years of faithful service to the congregation. The "This Is Your Life" program featured many friends who honored Miss Moyer. Telegrams were read and testimonials were given. At the close of the special services, a set of brass offering plates and a gold-covered cross were presented in honor of Laura E. Moyer's witness to the community.

Laura Emma Moyer (1899- ) was born at Hatfield, Pennsylvania, the daughter of Henry and Laura Cassel Moyer. She prepared herself for a career in home missions by studying at Elizabethtown College, the Pennsylvania Bible Institute (1926) and the Moody Bible School of Chicago (1929-1931). She spent two summers in Virginia in mission work before she came to Brooklyn.

Bro. D'Amico once wrote that in some ways the Calvary Church "out-Brethrens the Brethren." The church practiced the holy kiss at the conclusion of the monthly communion services. Cottage prayer meetings were held monthly for Bible study and prayer. At these meetings, Catholic friends who were reluctant to enter a Protestant Church, were invited to attend to become acquainted with the Protestant fellowship.

The church found growing difficulties in ministering to a community which was experiencing rapid changes. The Redhook district of Brooklyn, only a few blocks from the Calvary Church, was a troublesome and hardened neighborhood. Protestant churches virtually disappeared from this section of the city. Nearly half of the children of the three and a half million Brooklynites attended parochial schools. The Calvary Church stood in the shadows of the parochial school where Pastor D'Amico had taken his confirmation vows as a Roman Catholic.<sup>15</sup>

When Bro. D'Amico resigned in 1961, Louis Carbone was called to serve as interim-pastor of the church. He served until August 30, 1962 until Howard Mattice, a member of the congregation, assumed the pastoral responsibilities (October 16, 1962). A service of installation was conducted by district ministry representatives on February 22, 1963, at the time of the church's annual home-coming.

During the years of Bro. Mattice's pastorate (1962-1968), he also taught school. These were years of difficult decisions for the members. As early as the 1950s, suggestions were forwarded that the Calvary Church and the First Church of Brooklyn might merge. In 1962, the question of the merger of the two congregations re-appeared. By 1964, the Calvary Church, facing a rapidly deteriorating community, promoted a building fund to assist the congregation at a time of relocation.

Although the English-speaking services were supported, there was a rapid decline in the Italian-speaking services. To assist in the work, Frank Ottaviano was reinstated as the Italian-speaking pastor (May 16, 1965). When several district representatives visited the membership in 1964, they reported an excellent working spirit, improved attendance and a functioning interracial program. The percentage of black children attending the Vacation School was forty-five, with eighty-nine per cent

in the week-day school and more than twenty per cent in the Sunday School.

On May 26, 1967, Joseph M. Long, the Tri-District Executive Secretary, sent the following message to the Calvary Church officials:

"On Tuesday evening I had a meeting with the executive committee of the North Atlantic District Board. We discussed the property on 20th Street in Brooklyn at some length. It was the decision of the executive committee that every effort should be made to sell the property. . . ."

The Calvary Church membership voted in 1966 to merge their congregation with the Brooklyn First Church on 60th Street.

The Calvary Church property was advertised for sale and, in August, 1968, a sales agreement was prepared to sell the property to the Emmanuel Pentecostal Church for the sum of \$25,000. A final settlement was made by the contracting groups in December, 1968, and the full purchase price for the building was paid to the Commission on Witness of the Atlantic Northeast District in 1973.

The Italian Mission represented a venture by the Church of the Brethren into a multi-ethnic ministry. At a time when the brotherhood was extending its manner of life into India and China, the district and the brotherhood undertook a home mission work which ministered to people of Catholic-Italian backgrounds. Brooklyn was an ideal setting for this kind of ministry since, at the time the work began, only one in six people of the area were of American-born stock. This work became a forerunner of the church's later work with people of all ethnic backgrounds at home and abroad.

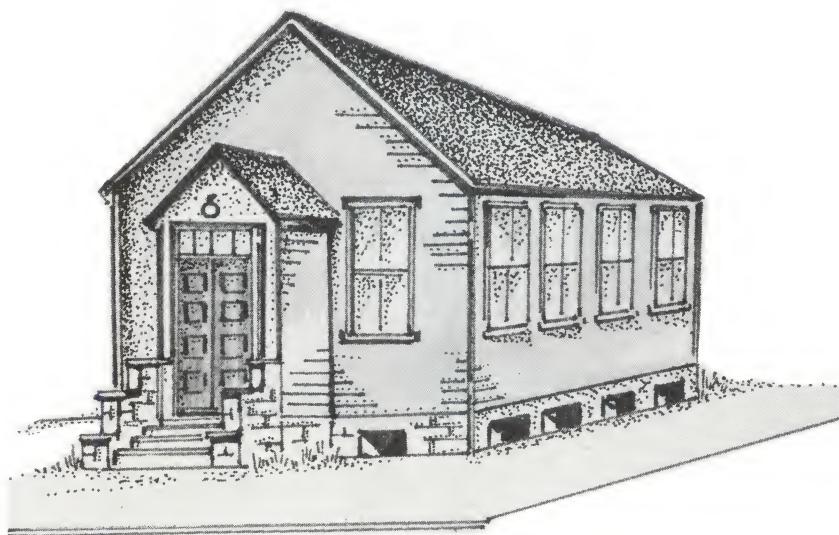
The Italian Mission also represented the church's early involvement in urban mission work. The Church of the Brethren developed a ministry in Brooklyn in the face of considerable opposition within the community itself. Much of the early and later emphasis was on the converting of Catholics to Protestantism. In spite of the resistance, faithful workers hurdled the barriers of language, culture and religion to promote a growing church for a period of sixty years. Street meetings, evangelistic services, house visitation and cottage prayer meetings were adopted to win men and women to Christ. One member of the Brooklyn Church observed, "All methods of witnessing for Christ are good, but we find the best method is personal visitation. We call on our people, open God's Word, and read it to them."

The Italian Mission in Brooklyn also ministered to its community in much the same fashion as the Church of the Brethren ministered to its own people in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century church appealed basically to people of Germanic background. The Calvary Church appealed chiefly to people of Italian-Catholic backgrounds. It brought these people into a warm fellowship of concerned persons and nurtured them in a faith which was strange to them. The Church of the Brethren in the nineteenth century expressed its community life in acts of worship and social visitation. In similar manner, the Italian Church

developed its own distinctive services to celebrate the sense of community among these people.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### WILMINGTON CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



The chance meeting of two Brethren on the streets of Wilmington resulted in the formation of a church. William T. Best and Mrs. John N. Jordin met one summer day in 1916 and discovered they were Brethren. Out of this meeting emerged a permanent friendship between the two families and the formation of plans for a Sunday School and preaching services. Further investigation revealed that no less than twenty-five Brethren were residing in the Wilmington area in the fall of 1916. The growth of industries in Wilmington during World War I attracted Brethren to the city.

The families of William T. Best, Warren Hank, David King, Archie Replogle and Levi Gordon soon met for regular fellowship. John N. Jordin, who lived in nearby Richardson Park, and Clayton Lucas, who lived on the DuPont Farms, met with the Brethren in these early house meetings. By common consent, the families met in the home of Archie Replogle at 1309 Oak Street in Wilmington for their Sunday services. John N. Jordin, a deacon, was the only official of the house-church at the time.

When these early meetings gave evidence of growth, the Brethren agreed to organize themselves into a mission. For a time, the new mission was claimed by both Eastern Maryland and the North Atlantic District. The Pennsylvania district provided a preaching ministry to the new fellowship and subsidized the traveling expenses of the ministers, many of whom came from Philadelphia. Listed among the early



*Mr. and Mrs. John N. Jordin*

preachers were Jacob A. Bricker, William S. Irwin, Harry Rohrer, Wilbur McKee, Tobias L. Fretz and Paul Garber.

The first business meeting of the Wilmington congregation was held on December 3, 1916. At this time, William T. Best became the clerk of the congregation and recorded the earliest *Minute*: "It was decided to have Bro. Harry W. Rohrer to come to organize the Sunday School at 10 A.M. on December 10, 1916." Bro. Rohrer, a lay minister of Philadelphia, later reported that a mission had been opened in one of the rooms of the Senator Bayard mansion located at the corner of Maple and South Clayton Streets.<sup>1</sup> There were thirty church members and a Sunday School of approximately forty. Arrangements were also made to conduct regular Sunday evening church services.

For the next four years (1917-1920), the membership met in the mansion room. A fire destroyed the mansion in 1921, and the church was compelled to relocate. From 1921 until 1924, Sunday School and worship services were conducted in the William Tinsman Hall in Richardson Park. For a period of time, when the hall was dismantled, the congregation returned to a house-meeting form of worship, meeting in the homes of John N. Jordin, Levi Gordon, W. G. Hank and Clayton Lucas. The congregation also met in the Five Points Fire Hall in Richardson Park at the invitation of the fire company.

During the period the church was meeting in the Bayard Mansion, strong efforts were made to establish a Church of the Brethren in the city of Wilmington. On December 16, 1919, the North Atlantic District Mission Board held a meeting to formulate plans for the construction of

a new church. The report which came to the 1920 district meeting was glowing:

"The work in Wilmington is very promising. The total membership is now about sixty-five, with a Sunday School that cannot grow because of a lack of room. We are supporting a part-time pastor at \$35 per month. We have purchased a very desirable lot in a splendid section of the city for \$2500."<sup>2</sup>

The District Mission Board circulated a flyer concerning the work in Wilmington. Appeals were made for funds which were needed to construct a church. Unfortunately, the site selected for the new building was in the heart of "Little Italy" at Fifth and Clayton Streets. When a tool shed, erected for the building program, was ransacked by community residents, the board decided to abandon the building of a church at the site.<sup>3</sup>

By 1920, Brethren Gordon, Hank and King had taken up residence in Richardson Park. Cottage prayer meetings and worship services were conducted regularly in these homes. Bro. Wilbur K. McKee (1920-1921), Paul Garber (1922) and Tobias L. Fretz (1923) ministered to the growing church under the supervision of the North Atlantic District Mission Board.

Berzy B. Ludwick (1877-1964), the son of David L. and Catherine George Ludwick, and a native of West Virginia, ministered to the Wilmington congregation as an interim supply pastor from October 7, 1923, until April 27, 1924. Bro. Ludwick was then residing in the Philadelphia area and commuted to Wilmington for services. During the course of some of his sermons, Bro. Ludwick suggested to the membership that if they expected to grow, they must build a church house. The members agreed and purchased three lots on Belmont Avenue in Richardson Park for the sum of \$1200.

Elder M. C. Swigart broke ground for the construction of the Church of the Brethren in Wilmington (April 6, 1926). The lots purchased earlier in the city of Wilmington were sold. A new building, forty-eight feet by twenty-eight feet, was constructed by Levi Gordon and dedicated debt-free on September 12, 1926. A note to the brotherhood observed the occasion:

"September 12 was one of the red letter days for this mission. We dedicated our new church which was part of the answer to ten years of praying, hoping and working. . . It was through the untiring efforts of our pastor, and the cooperation of the District Mission Board, that this building was secured."<sup>4</sup>

The work at Wilmington was a venture of faith. The construction of a church building was undertaken at a time when the average attendance was eighteen persons. On the day of dedication, thirty-nine members of the Wilmington Church were in attendance. The offerings and pledges for the day amounted to \$548.74. The total cost of the building, amounting to \$5,301.40, was paid without contracting a debt.

In 1926, twenty-nine members of the Wilmington Mission petitioned the District Mission Board for the right to organize as a congregation.

The petition was approved and the North Atlantic District recognized the church on April 2, 1926. On December 1, the congregation passed a resolution, calling itself the "Wilmington Church of the Brethren." The charter was granted on July 15, 1927.

Berzy B. Ludwick was elected pastor of the congregation on April 12, 1927. He and his wife, the former Lulu C. Baughman, of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, moved to Richardson Park. The congregation purchased a parsonage at 28 Belmont Avenue for the sum of \$4500.

When Bro. Ludwick first came to the community to serve the church in 1923, there were nine adults and six children in attendance at the services. In 1927, the Sunday School attendance climbed to nearly one hundred with a corresponding increase in the church attendance. On October 31, 1927, the congregation observed its first lovefeast service with Elder M. C. Swigart officiating. "For many of our members it was the first service of its kind ever experienced."<sup>5</sup> When Bro. Ludwick resigned on August 29, 1929, the church membership was eighty-six.

Wilbur Monroe Bantz (1900-1957) came from Fort Wayne, Indiana, on September 19, 1929, to begin his pastorate in Wilmington. A graduate of Manchester College (1926), he continued his education by attending Crozer Theological Seminary, graduating in 1934. He and his wife, the former Martha Ida Blessing, of Trotwood, Ohio, ministered to the church during the difficult depression years (1929-1934). The pastor introduced the unified worship service on Sunday mornings. The attendances remained consistently good.

During the economic depression, the support from the District Mission Board was small. The Wilmington Church suffered greatly when high unemployment came to the area. Early in 1933, the District Mission Board reported to the district conference:

"Your Mission Board for the year 1932-1933 has not been able to do anything progressive because of a lack of funds. We have not been able to forge ahead in paying even the deficit of the previous year. . Some of our assisted places where churches depend entirely on the weekly wages of the membership are worse hit than others. There is a call for more assistance from us to aid them. Wilmington, perhaps, is the worst hit. Only four or five of the membership is working. Unless more substantial aid is rendered there, drastic action will be necessary. They have asked for more help. Last year we gave only \$75.6"

In 1934, Bro. Bantz accepted the call to be pastor of the Olivet Church in Northeastern Ohio. He concluded five years of service with the Wilmington Church.

Murray L. Wagner (1905- ) was installed as the new pastor of the church in April, 1935. Born in Glen Rock, Pennsylvania, he was baptized in the Shrewsbury Church of the Brethren (1921) and licensed to the ministry in the First Church of the Brethren, Baltimore, Maryland (1927). He is the son of Elmer T. and Lillie Sweitzer Wagner. Bro. Wagner came to Wilmington from the pastorate of the First Church in Baltimore. He lived at the Wilmington Church parsonage but attended Crozer Theological Seminary four days per week. He graduated from

the seminary in 1937 and took post-graduate work in church history in 1938. Bro. Wagner was married to Grace E. Bosserman, of Adams County, Pennsylvania, on February 25, 1932.

There was no decline in church activities during the depression years. The Wilmington Church established itself as a community-minded congregation in the period from 1935 to 1939. A small boys' group was organized under the leadership of the pastor and George Hughes. As this group increased in size, Ralph Dill and Norman Howett assisted with the work and drew many young men into the Sunday School. Several uniformed baseball clubs, a basketball team and a young men's baseball team were organized under the sponsorship of the Men's Fellowship. Ezra T. Selders represented the congregation in its support of these activities.

A very active Boy Scout Troop met in an improved church basement. The organization was one of the most active in the state of Delaware. The church basement was improved by using carpeting from discarded Pullman cars and by securing theater seats from a dismantled theater in the Wilmington community.

Remembered by many were the services provided in 1935-1936 by the ladies of the congregation to the W. P. A. workers. Hundreds of Works Progress Administration men constructed a sewer in the community. Beginning in November, 1935, the women of the Wilmington Church invited these men to eat their lunches in the church basement. Within a short time, the women were providing these workers with hot soup at five cents per bowl and all the free bread and coffee they wished. Soon merchants of the community donated food and bakeries offered their day-old bread. The church project was heralded in newspapers as far away as Washington, D. C., and New York City, as an expression of "practical Christianity." The number of men served daily ranged from eighty to one hundred and seventy-five.

When the pipeless furnace of the church had to be abandoned, a philanthropist of the Wilmington area sent a check to buy a new oil furnace. He commented that he had been observing the congregation's numerous social and religious services to the community in the form of clubs and help to W. P. A. workers, and he wished to help in promoting this kind of practical Christianity. The generosity of the donor, known only to the pastor, was so great that a substantial amount of money remained after the furnace was purchased. When the pastor tried to return the balance to the donor, he suggested the church use it to paint the exterior of the church and the parsonage.

John C. Middlekauff (1911- ) succeeded Bro. Wagner in the Wilmington pastorate. Bro. Wagner accepted a pastorate at the Pleasant Valley Church, Weyers Cave, Virginia. A native of Hagerstown, Maryland, Bro. Middlekauff was baptized (1923) and ordained at the Hagerstown Church of the Brethren (March 27, 1932). A graduate of Juniata College and Princeton Theological Seminary (1936), he began his work in Wilmington on September 1, 1939. With his wife, the former Hilda Guyer Ritchey, of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, Bro.

Middlekauff served the church until 1944.

Earl H. Kurtz of Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, began attending the Wilmington Church in 1939. He ministered as the summer pastor until the arrival of Bro. Middlekauff. While he taught public school in the Wilmington area he attended the worship services of the Wilmington Church. The congregation called him to the ministry and advanced him to the full ministry before he moved to Elgin, Illinois, to become the manager of the Brethren Publishing House. The youth of the congregation gave him a surprise farewell before his departure in 1940.

The years from 1940 to 1944 were encouraging. Seventy-four persons attended the Maundy Thursday lovefeast in 1941, the largest attendance at a lovefeast to that date. The Easter Sunday attendance also broke records.

These were years of church and parsonage improvements. The exterior of the church was covered with white asbestos cement (1943). A parking lot and pavement had been added in 1941. The church basement was improved by placing a new floor and more spacious windows. Special efforts were also made to reduce the mortgage on the church parsonage. In order to assist in the mortgage reduction, the Men's Fellowship tried to collect one thousand feet of dimes---each foot producing \$1.70. The men collected \$1,625 in this manner. A mortgage-burning service was held on December 5, 1943, with C. C. Ellis and Ross D. Murphy as speakers for the occasion. John N. Jordin recounted the experiences he and others had in the founding of the Wilmington Church.

From the time the nation's first peacetime draft became effective (1941), many young men of the Church of the Brethren came into the Wilmington community. Some of them worked for the state of Delaware in the State Health and Welfare program, serving in mental hospitals. These conscientious objectors frequently identified themselves with the Wilmington Church and served through its program during their stay in Delaware.<sup>8</sup>

When John C. Middlekauff concluded his work in Wilmington, he was succeeded by J. Emmert Dettra. For a six-month period prior to his arrival, Ross D. Murphy ministered to the church. Bro. Dettra, who was serving in the Salem Church, Stephens City, Virginia, began his work on June 1, 1945.

Bro. Dettra resigned his work and moved to Westernport, Maryland, late in March, 1947. Mark C. Ebersole, who was attending Crozer Theological Seminary, served as a short-term pastor. In the fall of 1947, Norman F. Ford, former pastor of the Williamsburg Church of the Brethren (1944-1946), accepted the pastoral responsibilities at the Richardson Park Church.

Under Bro. Ford's part-time leadership, the congregation took on new life. "Our weekly attendance is increasing and an excellent spirit of Christian fellowship is evidenced by the desire to reach out into the community", one correspondent noted.<sup>9</sup> Crowded Sunday School facilities led to plans for expansion. In 1948, a building committee

formulated plans for Christian Education and recreation space. This committee consisted of Mrs. R. L. Hummel, Ezra T. Selders, C. J. Harris, Jr., W. G. Hank, Harvey Stump, George Mayer and Jennie Haas. Sunday School officers and teachers promoted the growth of the Sunday School by regular visits to the homes of Sunday School members. In 1948, the men of the church engaged in an Every-Member Visitation to active and inactive members.

The congregation continued to extend its outreach ministries to the community. The Men's Work Organization sponsored a Gra-Y Club for Intermediate boys under the leadership of George Mayer. Both boys' and girls' clubs met in the church in cooperation with the Wilmington Y.M.C.A. Six heifers and a goat were purchased by church and Sunday School members for overseas shipment. When Helena Kruger visited the congregation in October, 1949, she aroused interest and support for the brotherhood refugee program.

The Wilmington Church received many refugees into the Wilmington community. The first refugee family to come under the church's sponsorship was Eugene Burbelo, Mrs. Nikolski, and her two sons from the Russian Ukraine (1950). In the fall of the same year, two more families arrived. Leo and Ellie Roometz and their small son came from Estonia, and William Bosianok, his wife and daughter, came from Austria. The congregation sponsored a total of twenty-four refugees and found apartments and employment for them. Some of the families resided in a home on Belmont Avenue, willed to the church by A. K. Taylor in 1939.

One of the active charter members of the congregation died on August 8, 1949. Lydia G. Best (1885-1949) was for many years the Home Department superintendent and regularly visited every home in the congregation.

During his pastorate in Wilmington, Norman F. Ford was employed as a local Y. M. C. A. secretary. He led the church in many expanded social and religious ministries to the community. In 1950, no less than four community clubs were meeting weekly at the church. In addition, a Girl Scout Troop from the community used the church as a gathering place. The Women's Work Organization sponsored the founding of a Home Makers' group for the Richardson Park community.

In 1950, a pantry shower was held for the displaced persons who were brought into the community. In addition, the young adults of the congregation sponsored monthly suppers for all the families of the church, usually presenting a film after the evening meal. The church began to tape its services to take into the homes of shut-ins to permit them to share in corporate worship experiences by the way of a tape recorder. George and Matilda Mayer purchased a projector to show slides and filmstrips and gave this to the church in memory of William and Lydia Best, charter members of the Wilmington Church.

A ground-breaking service for a new educational unit was held on December 17, 1950. John N. Jordin, who was active in founding the church, turned the first spadeful of earth. The cornerstone for the new

project was laid in 1951. Much of the work on this new facility was done by the men of the church and community. By September, 1951, the building was under roof and the plumbing was installed. Youth and women of the church joined in raising funds for the Christian Education unit. By May, 1952, a report observed,

"Most of our Sunday School rooms are now in use. We have also decided to plaster and to remodel the sanctuary. Work on the new building and the remodeling project are nearing completion."<sup>10</sup>

In 1954, Norman F. Ford accepted a call to become a national boys' secretary in India for the Y. M. C. A. In preparation for this overseas assignment, he and Mrs. Ford attended the Kennedy School of Missions at Hartford, Connecticut. The new position required that Bro. Ford should organize and administer Christian activities for the boys of India and Ceylon. Before the Fords departed for India, the Wilmington Church dedicated their new educational wing and sanctuary improvements (June 13, 1954). Bro. Ford delivered the morning message. Caleb W. Bucher, the congregation's former moderator, preached the dedication sermon and D. Howard Keiper, the moderator, offered the prayer of dedication.

At a Sunday morning church council (January 17, 1954), the membership voted to employ Donald L. Robinson (1929- ) as the full-time pastor. Elected to the ministry on May 18, 1947, at the Walnut Grove congregation in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Bro. Robinson prepared for his calling at Juniata College (1951) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (1954) in Chicago, Illinois. He entered the work in Wilmington on July 1, 1954, with his father, J. A. Robinson, and D. Howard Keiper, formally installing him. Bro. Robinson and his wife, the former Eleanor Judy, of Eglon, West Virginia, provided an energetic ministry for the next three years in Wilmington (1954-1957).

To help the church with its stewardship obligations, the pastor directed the congregation in a fund-raising campaign. He also led the church in adopting its first constitution, which provided for a church board of twenty-five members (1955). In order to provide for the growing Sunday School, a second floor addition was constructed to the educational unit. The pastor edited a paper entitled, *Brethren Tidings*, to inform the congregation of the church's activities.

A major community project of the Wilmington Church came in the summer of 1956. A brotherhood sponsored work camp brought seven youth into the area for a six-week period to work in the low-income settlements near the church. Harold Brenneman, Glen Faus, Sylvia Middlekauff, Phyllis Ann Moser, Patricia Shelly and W. Bryan Staufer constituted the workers.

From July 5th to August 18th, these workers provided a variety of ministries to the community. They cleared a vacant lot, renovated an apartment for classes, visited homes and conducted classes for children. Nearly a hundred children met for crafts, recreation, a story hour and singing on a daily basis. There were sewing classes for older girls. Out of these efforts emerged a junior church choir. Interested persons



*Wilmington Church of the Brethren*

in the Wilmington area continued some of the services inaugurated by these work-campers.<sup>11</sup>

When Bro. Robinson concluded his services to the church in 1957, the congregation called Garnett E. Phibbs (1922- ) to serve the church on an interim basis. Bro. Phibbs was a native of Virginia, having been baptized (1936) and licensed to the ministry (1942) at the Pulaski Church. He was ordained to the full ministry in Chicago, Illinois (April 15, 1945) just before his graduation from Bethany Theological Seminary. He came to the Wilmington pastorate from a pastorate in the Champaign-Urbana Church of the Brethren in Illinois. The Wilmington congregation accepted him on an interim agreement, fully aware that he was to become the Executive Secretary of the Council of Churches of Greater Trenton, New Jersey, the first such executive in the state of New Jersey. He served both the Wilmington Church and the Council of Churches until June 1, 1958, at which time he became the full-time Secretary of the Council (1958-1962).

Bro. Phibbs showed keen interest in the rights of black people. In 1958, he began to compile the actions which had been taken by various congregations of the Church of the Brethren with reference to the inclusion of these people into the church's life. He searched the *Minutes* of congregations for actions taken from 1724 until 1958. In 1959, Executive Secretary Phibbs was granted the NAACP, National Association

for Colored People Service Award for his work.

Roy Keeny Miller was installed as the new pastor of the Richardson Park congregation on September 18, 1958. He and his family moved from the Staunton Chruch of the Brethren in Virginia. Bro. Miller had wide experience as an evangelist and as a pastor, having served the Brownville Church of Maryland, the Marsh Creek Church of Southern Pennsylvania and the Wilmington congregation from 1958 to 1961.

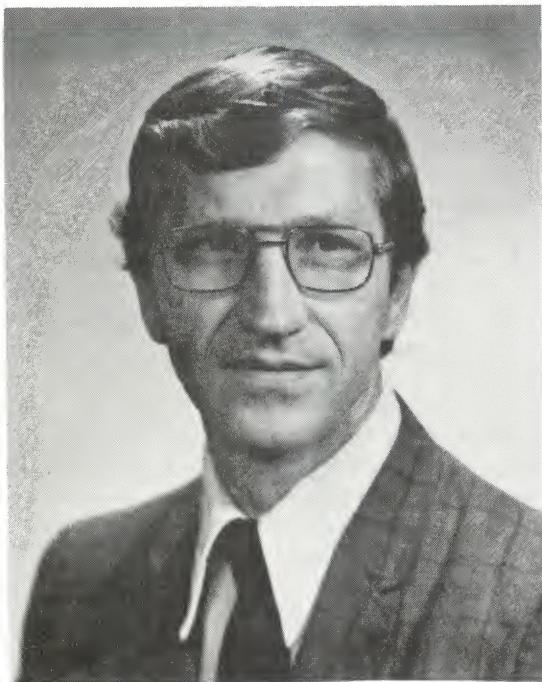
Bro. Miller arrived in time to assist the members in the observance of Christian Education Week. This event, occurring from September 28 to October 5, 1958, was designed to aid the teaching staff of the Sunday School and church. Leaders for this series of meetings included Matila Mayer, Mary Miller, Roy K. Miller and John D. Keiper. The church showed an increasing membership, reaching a peak enrollment of 186 persons in 1960. Bro. Miller moved to Newark, New Jersey in 1961.

Ronald D. Hershberger (1933- ) became the pastor of the Wilmington Church on September 1, 1961. Born in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, the son of Wilbert H. and Dorothy Misholder Hershberger, he was called to the Christian ministry in the Roxbury Church of the Brethren in Johnstown (1951). His home congregation, where he was baptized in 1944, and was ordained to the full ministry in 1956. On September 3, 1955, Bro. Hershberger was married to Martha Jeffers, of Philadelphia. Bro. Hershberger served the Wilmington Church from 1961 to 1966.

The Richardson Park church was formally received as a member of the Delaware Council of Churches in January, 1965. On October 22-23, 1966, the church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Former pastors Norman F. Ford, Donald L. Robinson and Murray L. Wagner were guest speakers for the event. The celebration concluded with a love-feast and communion observance.

In 1967, three Richardson Park community churches formed an organization to minister to community needs. The Richardson Park Methodist Church, the Calvary United Presbyterian Church and the Richardson Park Church of the Brethren created a private action program and, in 1968, named it the Richardson Park Community Action Program. The house at 33 Belmont Avenue was made available by the Wilmington congregation for the nonprofit organization. The community action group has sponsored a preschool program, a tutorial service, girls' and boys' clubs, a study hall, a homemakers' club, thrift sales and a social service referral ministry.

Allen T. Hansell ( - ), a graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary of Chicago, Illinois, was called to be pastor of the congregation, beginning in September, 1967. During the next three years, the church increased its commitments to community outreach programs. When the congregation faced financial difficulties in 1970, Bro. Hansell resigned to become minister of Christian Education in the Hagerstown Church of the Brethren, Maryland. At this time, the members decided to take a look at the future of the church and "authorized a study of the



*Allen T. Hansell*

congregation to determine its future mission.”<sup>12</sup>

Murray L. Wagner, who retired from the ministry after forty years of service, returned in October, 1970, to serve as the interim-pastor. He ministered for a year and assisted the church in its reevaluation.

Robert Blair, assistant professor of sociology at Elizabethtown College, surveyed the church and the community. He submitted a report to the church in January, 1971,

“The Richardson Park area is one of the oldest suburbs in the Wilmington community. The proportion of renters is increasing in which was formerly essentially a community of home-owners. . . The educational level for the district is the lowest of any adjoining community. Almost forty-six per cent of the adults have less than a high school education.”

In April, 1971, the Atlantic Northeast District Board granted \$5,000 per year for a three-year term as supplemental support to the Wilmington congregation. The membership voted to have Bro. Allen T. Hansell return as the full-time minister. The church has continued its strong tradition of cooperative community service. In many instances, the leadership for such ministries has been provided by the Wilmington Church.

In the course of its congregational life, the Wilmington Church has

called or advanced the following men in the ministry:

Earl H. Kurtz. Licensed to preach on May 17, 1939. Installed into the ordained ministry on January 4, 1940.

Murray L. Wagner. Ordained to the full ministry on May 17, 1939.

John C. Middlekauff. Advanced to the eldership on May 28, 1941.

Calvin J. Harris. Licensed to preach on September 26, 1945.

George H. Tinsman, Jr. Ordained to the ministry on November 26, 1948.

Norman F. Ford. Ordained to the eldership on October 13, 1948.

Mark LeRoy Miller. Licensed to preach on November 27, 1960.

The following brethren have presided over the life of the congregation as elders and moderators:

District Mission Board. 1916-1928.

Milton C. Swigart. 1928-1934.

Ross D. Murphy. 1934-1946.

David K. Hanawalt. 1946-1947.

Caleb W. Bucher. 1947-1949.

Norman F. Ford. 1949-1954.

D. Howard Keiper. 1954-1960.

Luke H. Brandt. 1960-1966.

Donald W. Rummel. 1966-1970.

Caleb W. Bucher. 1970-

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### THE POTTSTOWN CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



The community of Potts Grove was plotted in 1752-1753 and honored Thomas Potts, its founder. The village streets in this colonial community bore such names as King, Queen, Hanover, York and Charlotte. Thomas Potts and his son were Tories who maintained their loyalty to the King of England. Although these early iron manufacturers turned against the mother country after the passage of the Stamp Act, the street names remained unchanged.<sup>1</sup> When Thomas Potts died in 1768, the village had only a dozen homes.

In 1815, Potts Grove was chartered as Pottstown. Members of the Church of the Brethren made their earliest attempt to establish a congregation here in February, 1888. Pottstown was a growing community with iron and bridge works. Its carriage factories, textile-, planing- and flour-mills attracted many people from the surrounding villages and farms. When the Brethren did not succeed on their first attempt at

founding a church, they tried again in 1898. Still facing discouragements, the work lapsed until 1916. At the request of some members living in Pottstown, the District Mission Board called a meeting at the home of S. K. Kulp.

On May 18, 1916, twenty-five persons from the new North Atlantic District met in a special district meeting to consider the purchase of a property for a new mission in Pottstown. Members of the District Mission Board, George D. Kuns, W. S. Price, J. Kurtz Miller, H. T. Horne and H. K. Garman, conferred with the delegates and reached the following decision:

“The meeting ratified the appointment of seven brethren, representing adjoining churches, who are authorized to solicit funds for the purchasing of the Brick Church at Fifth and York Streets. We learn that this property can be bought for the low sum of \$2,600, and hence believe that this is an opportune time for all the churches of the district to come to the aid of the committee by giving liberally so that the above property may be purchased.”<sup>2</sup>

A sales agreement was dated August 10, 1916 and agreed to pay for the Thomas Searles Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church by January 1, 1917. Improvements were made on this property and the first service was conducted by L. R. Holsinger at 3:30 P.M. on October 15, 1916. Services of dedication for the building were held the next Sunday, with C. C. Ellis as the guest speaker. The Sunday School was organized on October 29, 1916, with services held each Sunday at 2:30 P.M. The neighboring Coventry Church observed about the new congregation in Pottstown: “There are thirty-two members living in Pottstown and a strong church is hoped for ere long.”<sup>3</sup>

Galen K. Walker (1883- ) became the first pastor of this mission church on August 1, 1917. Members of the new fellowship were active in canvassing the neighborhood on behalf of the Sunday School and the church. By October, 1917, the Sunday School achieved an enrollment of seventy-five with new pupils being added weekly. Cradle Roll and Home Department superintendents were appointed to promote these phases of the Sunday School.

Galen Knepper Walker was a native of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, the son of Daniel H. and Mary Knepper Walker. He spent his early years in the Brothersvalley congregation and was still in his teen years when he served as the church chorister, Sunday School superintendent and Sunday School teacher. He was elected to the ministry (October 20, 1906) by his home congregation and advanced to the full ministry on March 30, 1907. During the years he was pastor of the Pottstown Church he also attended Crozer Theological Seminary, graduating in 1920. On November 28, 1911, he was married to Fern Elizabeth Coppock of Tipp City, Ohio.

The Pottstown Church conducted its first business meeting on December 4, 1917. At this council, the members formed their church organization and elected their officers. The elected officials were: Galen K. Walker, elder-in-charge; S. K. Kulp, Frank Hoffman and

Elwood Vanderslice, deacons; and Charles Crosby, S. K. Kulp, Elwood Vanderslice and Frank Hoffman, trustees.

The Pottstown Church petitioned through the District Conference on March 29, 1918, for the right to be recognized as a separate congregation. The district meeting of April 25, 1918, granted the petition and selected J. P. Hetric, L. R. Holsinger and C. F. McKee to organize the mission into a congregation. The committee met with the church on May 17, 1918, and the name of the new congregation was recognized as "The First Church of the Brethren of Pottstown, Pennsylvania."

Meeting in a substantial and attractive house of worship, the church had a good beginning. Both young and old were involved in the activities of the church life. One reporter stated, "There is a fine spirit of unanimity and we believe a splendid outlook for the church in Pottstown." On November 18, 1918, thirteen members of the Parker Ford Church united with the Pottstown Church. By 1919, the membership increased to fifty-five, a number nearly double the membership when Bro. Walker began his pastorate. The average attendance at the morning worship service was sixty-five in 1919. The Sunday School enrollment by the close of the year was 108 persons.

When Galen K. Walker arrived in the community, he purchased his own home next to the church. And earnest call from the Huntingdon Church of the Brethren persuaded him to leave his work in Pottstown on April 1, 1920. At this time, Bro. Walker sold his house to the trustees of the church for \$4500, although it was worth more in the real estate market. The pastor said of his decision, "I wanted the church to have it since the people were kind enough to permit me to go to Crozer Theological Seminary for three years to receive my Bachelor of Divinity degree."<sup>4</sup>

Before he moved from Pottstown, the pastor graduated eight persons from a teacher training class. He also planned for a second class more advanced than the first one.

The new pastor of the congregation was H. Vernon Slawter, who preached his first sermon in the church on Easter Sunday, 1920. The pastor was ordained to the ministry at the Germantown Church of the Brethren on January 23, 1920.

In 1921, the Pottstown congregation was the only church in the community to conduct a Daily Vacation Bible School. There were 126 persons enrolled. In September, 1921, the congregation cooperated with a district-wide evangelism effort and the congregation added fifty-four new members. A note from the church observed: "Our pastor can interest young and old alike. Our church is growing steadily under his leadership. We have a large number of young people in our midst."<sup>5</sup> The congregation formed a Young Peoples' League and a Junior Christian Workers' Meeting.

The Pottstown Church had grown to such strength that it became self-supporting by June 30, 1922.

During the summer of 1923, Maynard Lamar Cassady (1897- ) ministered to the congregation. Immediately following this brief minis-

try, he went to Europe where he spent fourteen months on a Church History Fellowship at the Universities of Berlin and Tübingen.

Bro. Slawter was reelected in the fall of 1923 to a second term of three years as pastor. During 1923 and 1924, the Pottstown Church choir assisted the pastor in radio broadcasts over station W F I in Philadelphia. Singers from the Bethany and Germantown churches assisted in several of these engagements. An annual report from the congregation stated:

“We indeed feel that from the beginning of this year we have been blessed, not only materially, but most of all spiritually. Every service has been greeted with large attendances. Our evening services are especially well attended, both by members and visitors, and we are glad that the Lord is helping us to extend his work.”<sup>6</sup>

In the first decade of its existence, the Pottstown Church grew from a mission of approximately thirty persons to a church of more than a hundred members. The pastor of the Searles Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church returned to extend greetings to the Brethren on the occasion of their tenth anniversary (October 23-24, 1926). In January, 1927, M. G. Brumbaugh conducted a Bible Institute for the church.

A. M. Dixon succeeded H. Vernon Slawter as the pastor in 1926. Bro. Dixon resigned his work at Hagerstown, Maryland, because of ill health and the desire to enter educational work. He was a native of the North Atlantic District and returned to minister in an area he knew well. He and his wife, the former Elizabeth Kline, of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, ministered briefly to the church in Pottstown (1926-1928). The pastoral family moved into a parsonage which had been recently renovated and redecorated.

J. Kurtz Miller (1865-1935), who had been active in establishing the lines for the North Atlantic District, became pastor of the congregation in 1929. He was active in the district at the Brooklyn First Church. The years of depression which affected the nation were not extremely hurtful to the congregation. “We closed our fiscal year with all bills Paid”, one report stated. The membership appreciated the tireless labors of Bro. and Sister Miller, of whom it was said on one occasion by a member, “They possess the rare quality of making beautiful everything they touch.”

During their Pottstown pastorate (1929-1934), the Millers encouraged the church to form a Junior Aid Society. The Ladies’ Aid Society remodeled the church kitchen and basement and the men built a concrete block garage for the pastor on the parsonage lot. In 1929, a mortgage burning service for the parsonage indebtedness was held. “We have closed the most prosperous year in the whole history of the Pottstown Church.”<sup>7</sup>

An annex was constructed to the church in 1932. By 1933, the church membership had increased to 139 persons. A member of the church commented concerning the work of the Millers:

“They have a quiet way of aiding each of us to find the place where we can be of most service. Our achievements in the past three years

sum up more vital things that have been accomplished than in all of the previous seventeen years of this mission-church.'':<sup>8</sup>

J. Kurtz Miller retired from the work at Pottstown on August 31, 1934. He and Mrs. Miller spent a year in Florida and then returned to Pennsylvania to visit with relatives and friends. On one of these visits, both fell victim to pneumonia. Sister Miller died on September 18 and Bro. Miller died on September 20, 1935. They were laid to rest together in the Chiques Church Cemetery in Lancaster County on September 22, 1935.

On December 1, 1934, Arthur C. Miller (1886-1947) began his work with the church on a part-time basis. The new pastor was the son of Elder Benjamin and Mary Myers Miller of Virginia. At the age of seventeen, A. C. Miller accepted Christ and devoted the remainder of his life to Christian service. For a period of time he farmed and conducted evangelistic meetings. Prior to his ministry in Pottstown, he was pastor of the Windber and Johnstown churches of Western Pennsylvania. He was married to Bessie Cline of Virginia.

The congregation maintained an active youth program. When the church purchased carpet runners for the sanctuary, the youth were helpful in purchasing and placing the carpet. The youth also sponsored a baseball and a basketball league among the churches of the community.

On October 2, 1938, a homecoming and anniversary celebration was observed by the Pottstown Church. The building in which the Brethren worshipped had been constructed by the Methodists in 1888. On this occasion, many Methodists of the community shared in the services which recognized the construction of the building.

A. C. Miller resigned to assume the pastorate of the Church of the Brethren in Twin Falls, Idaho, beginning July 1, 1939. In 1943, he returned to the North Atlantic District and united with the Coventry Church of the Brethren. He assisted churches of the district by ministering wherever he was called to serve. On February 25, 1947, he was stricken with a heart attack as the result of overexertion in a snow storm. Memorial services were conducted at the Coventry Church of the Brethren on March 1, 1947.

Wilbur A. Martin (1914- ) was installed as pastor of the Pottstown Church on November 5, 1939. Bro. Martin is the son of Ira and Edna Heinaman Martin of Ephrata, Pennsylvania. He was baptized as a member of the church at the age of twelve and, early in his life, he showed a deep interest in ministering on the African mission field. He was licensed (1935) and ordained (1938) to the Christian ministry in the Ephrata Church of the Brethren. In 1936, he was married to Evelyn H. Zuck, daughter of Elder Abram W. and Verdie Hibshman Zuck.

In anticipation of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the church made many improvements to its property (1940-1942). A reorganized Ladies' Aid Society gave generously to install a range in the church kitchen and to remodel the kitchen and bathroom of the church parsonage. The parsonage was painted and the church basement was redecorated with

new draperies and curtains. The church basement was remodeled to accommodate the Primary, Beginner and Cradle Roll Departments. Both the interior and the exterior of the church were painted by the men of the congregation.

In October 1940, the young people were responsible for a twenty-fourth anniversary observance. Nevin H. Zuck and Caleb W. Bucher were guests for the occasion and spoke in a sanctuary which was decorated with palms, ferns and twenty-four white chrysanthemums.

The congregation expanded its ministry into new forms of service during the crisis years of World War II. Members of a black congregation were invited to conduct services in the church on Brotherhood Sunday (1941). In 1942, a Civilian Public Service Conference for the churches in the Pottstown area was led by Florence F. Murphy. Roy A. Murray, a member of the congregation, was in Camp Kane as a C. P. S. worker. Meanwhile, the women of the church remained active by quilt-ing to provide funds for the church building fund.

C. C. Ellis was the speaker on the church's twenty-fifth anniversary (1942). At the close of this service in April, each member was given a church *Directory*. The church cooperated with other area congregations in sponsoring Christian Education Schools and Thanksgiving Day services. In the summer months of 1942, a fifteen-week course of Bible Study and Christian Education was conducted by pastor Martin and Clayton H. Gehman, pastor of the Parker Ford Church.

Under Bro. Martin's leadership, the church increased in numbers and in its outreach ministry. The church voted to give financial support to Edward T. Angeny, a missionary to China from the North Atlantic District (1944). Aware that many people were unable to attend church in Pottstown, the youth and the pastor began to conduct Sunday afternoon services at the Glasgow Chapel northeast of Pottstown. These services were continued until 1946, at which time the attendance was transferred to the Pottstown Church.

In 1946, the congregation's Harvest Home offering of \$300 was used to meet the church's share in the district wheat project. In 1948 the membership purchased a bus to bring interested persons from the nearby rural areas to the Sunday School and church services. This effort, including the canvassing of the rural areas, was conducted as part of the brotherhood-wide Advance With Christ program.

Wilbur A. Martin resigned his work in 1951 because of impaired health. He was succeeded in the pastorate by Ralph R. Frey, who was installed on June 6, 1951. Ralph R. Frey was born near Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, on February 19, 1901, the son of Abraham L. and Sadie Rider Frey. He united with the Church of the Brethren at Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania (1925) and was licensed (1931) and ordained (1940) by his home congregation. Prior to his pastoral work at Pottstown, he was minister of the Stevens Hill Church of the Brethren in Eastern Pennsylvania (1931-1947).

On January 24, 1952, the church in council decided to purchase the



*Ralph R. Frey*

Hetzel home, located at 41 E. Fifth Street, in order to expand the congregation's Sunday School facilities. This building, purchased for \$9,400, was used as a parish house and a Sunday School center. On December 29, 1952, the church was incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

Paul E. Ritchey (1928- ) became the pastor of the church in September, 1956. Bro. Ritchey is the son of Marvin S. and Mildred L. McFarland Ritchey of Everett, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of Manchester College (1951) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (1954) of Chicago. He ministered as pastor of the Claysburg Church of the Brethren (1954-1955) before coming to Pottstown. In 1952, he was the summer pastor of the Willow Creek Church in South Dakota. He was married to Portia B. Baugher of York County, Pennsylvania.

The Pottstown Church accepted sponsorship for the German refugees, Mr. and Mrs. Wolfgang Otto and their son, in 1957. Mrs. Mary Wanner of the congregation offered her home to the family until arrangements could be made for them to have a place of their own.

When Bro. Ritchey concluded his pastorate in July, 1959, Robert H. Lloyd, of Spring City, Pennsylvania, served the congregation during the months of August and September. Charles M. Bieber (1919- ), on furlough from the Nigerian mission field, ministered to the congregation as interim-pastor from October 1, 1959 until June 1, 1960. Bro. Bieber was married to Mary Elizabeth High of Spring City, Pennsylvania. In 1960, the Biebers returned to Nigeria for a third term of service on the mission field.

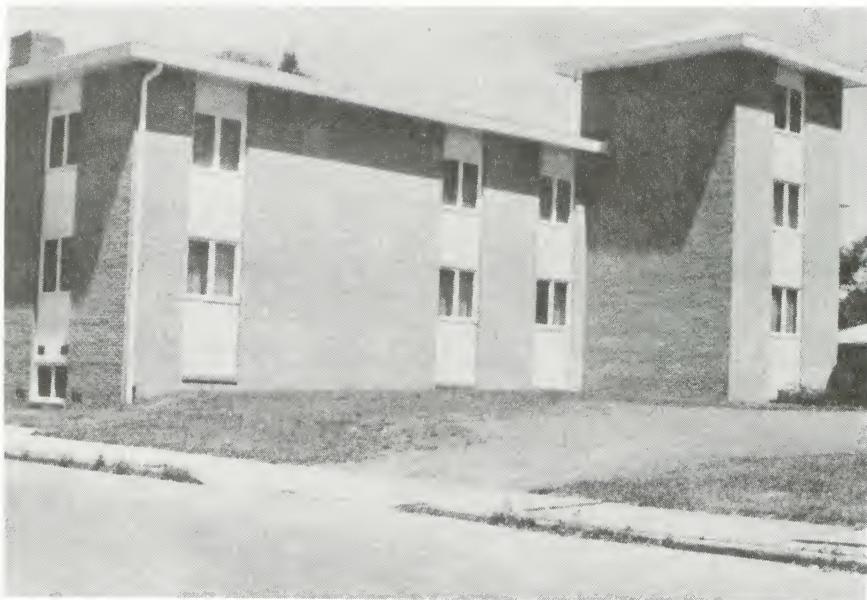
Donald Deffenbaugh became pastor of the Pottstown Church in May, 1960, and remained until August 31, 1963. A native of Western Pennsylvania, he assisted the church during the period in which it was plan-

ning for its future. A long-range planning committee proposed the construction of a Christian Education building. In preparation for this expansion, the membership purchased a house known as the Weller property (July, 1962). The Men's Fellowship remodeled the home and it became the church parsonage.

The Daily Vacation Bible School project for 1963 was the support of the denomination's mission in Ecuador. Also, in the course of the year, the youth erected directional signs in the community to assist tourists in locating the church. During the warm summer months, vesper services were conducted twice per month in the homes of members.

Bro Deffenbaugh resigned effective August 31, 1963, and moved to a new pastorate in Adrian, Michigan. Meral E. Cox ministered to the Pottstown Church as interim-pastor from 1963 until 1966. On October 1, 1966, Ralph E. Frey returned to the congregation to minister with Bro. Cox as the associate pastor. Bro. Meral E. Cox was ordained to the Christian ministry at the Pottstown Church on October 30, 1967. He continued his services to the congregation until 1971, at which time he submitted his resignation.

In April, 1964, the Pottstown Church established a fund to expand the facilities of the Church. The church later adopted a new system of church government with four commissions: the Commission on Stewards, the Commission on Nurture, the Commission on Witness and the Commission on Christian Education.



*The Pottstown Church of the Brethren*

A contract for a new educational building was signed on August 14, 1967, and the unit was dedicated on May 19, 1968. This building con-

tains seventeen classrooms, a pastor's study, a kitchen, rest rooms and a fellowship hall, all constructed at a cost of \$106,969. The need for a new church sanctuary has been a pressing problem for the Pottstown congregation.

Thomas Earl Auker (1947- ) began to serve as the student pastor of the Pottstown Church in 1971, while he was attending the Evangelical School of Theology at Myerstown, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of the United Wesleyan College (1970) of Allentown and of its School of Theology (1974). The son of Reuben Earl and Dorothy Mildred Fry Auker, he was licensed to the ministry in the Ephrata Church of the Brethren (September, 1968) and ordained to the full ministry in August, 1974. On August 11, 1973, he was married to Linda Mae Herr of Pottstown. Bro. Auker served as pastor until August, 1973, at which time he accepted the full-time pastorate of the Fredericksburg Church of the Brethren in the Atlantic Northeast District.

On April 6, 1975, Harold Z. Bomberger installed John W. Glick as the new pastor of the Pottstown Church. Bro. Glick moved from the Meyersdale Church in Western Pennsylvania with his wife and two children. In the period from 1973 until 1975, the pulpit of the congregation was supplied by visiting district ministers, including L. Dale Hylton who served the congregation during the winter months of 1973 and 1974.

Since its organization as a congregation, the following persons have been elders-in-charge or moderators of the church:

- 1916-1918. The District Mission Board.
- 1919-1920. Galen K. Walker.
- 1921-1923. A. M. Dixon.
- 1924-1927. H. Vernon Slawter.
- 1928. A. M. Dixon.
- 1929-1934. J. Kurtz Miller.
- 1935. District Mission Board.
- 1936. Quincy A. Holsopple.
- 1937-1939. Trostle P. Dick.
- 1940-1945. District Mission Board.
- 1946-1950. Wilbur A. Martin.
- 1951-1960. D. Howard Keiper.
- 1961-1965. Luke H. Brandt.
- 1966- Ralph R. Frey.

The congregation has called or ordained the following persons to the ministry:

- June 7, 1922. Glen E. Norris elected to the ministry.
- May 15, 1925. William J. Wadsworth, Jr., licensed to the ministry.  
Ordained in May, 1926.
- May 15, 1926. John N. Schlegel licensed to the ministry.
- January 19, 1941. Russell H. Weber licensed to the ministry.
- September 19, 1944. Jay Richard Gottshall licensed. Ordained to the ministry on December 30, 1945.
- May 27, 1945. Wilbur A. Martin advanced to the eldership.

May 19, 1946. Warren F. Groff licensed to the ministry.

October 26, 1952. Paul L. Groff licensed to the ministry.

October 26, 1952. Harold F. Keppen licensed. Ordained to the full ministry on September 16, 1953.

January 3, 1960. Robert W. Neff ordained to the ministry.

October 30, 1967. Meral E. Cox ordained to the ministry.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### THE PHILADELPHIA CALVARY CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Some members of the Philadelphia Bethany Church, eager to evangelize more of the Kensington area of the city, met at the home of Julia A. Croft in November, 1919. They pleaded with her to extend the work of the Brethren into the industrialized northeast section of the city. In time, a decision was made to rent a storeroom at 3417 Frankford Avenue from which to begin a mission.

Before many months passed, the building in which the mission was meeting was sold. The members, compelled to search for a new location, found a site at Helen and Venango Streets, about twenty blocks from the Kensington Avenue Church. With some assistance from a few members of the Philadelphia First Church, a lot with three deteriorating houses was purchased and a functional church building was completed on the lot. Members purchased an abandoned church building and moved the wooden structure to the new location. A frame church, painted white and trimmed with green, was completed in a short period of time. The structure was without a basement since the Crofts objected to social or athletic affairs like those conducted by the Bethany congregation. The first candle service and Sunday School was held with sixty-seven persons present on June 13, 1920.<sup>1</sup>

An unpublished manuscript of the congregation observed about the church's location:

"It took vision and much faith to see the possibilities in this location. There were three old houses which were practically falling down. . . These were an eyesore to the neighbors and many wanted to sell their homes because of it. Faith and prayer prevailed and in eleven days the ground was cleared. . . The first service was held on June 13, 1920, in the evening by candlelight because the electricity had not been installed."<sup>2</sup>

Members of the new mission visited the neighborhood in search of prospects. Some individuals made as many as 400 calls. Within a short time, the small church was filled with worshippers. Bro. and Sister Samuel B. Croft, who were growing aged, felt they could no longer endure the demands of a new mission. In 1920, they entered the German Baptist Home at 7023 Rising Sun Avenue in Philadelphia.

For a period of time, the mission work and preaching were conducted by visiting ministers. One of the early Brethren who rendered valuable aid to the growing congregation was John H. Cassady (1871-1939), a financial secretary for Juniata College (1917-1923). For several years (1921-1923) he maintained business headquarters in the Quaker City. During this time he ministered to the growing Calvary membership, leading it from a struggling mission to an organized church.<sup>3</sup> He was an experienced evangelist and pastor who had been called to the ministry at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania (March 2, 1903).

The labors of these early missionaries was successful. An early report

from the church for the year 1921 stated: "We held our second Rally Day service on September 25 with 274 present. An offering of \$46.68 was taken. Over 100 children formed in line and marched to the mission." By July 4, 1922, the new mission was formally organized as a new congregation under the name, "The Calvary Church of the Brethren, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania." An Annual Conference Committee, composed of P. S. Miller, T. S. Fike and J. A. Dove, met with the congregation to establish its organization. The church was chartered with ninety-seven members and the 1923 district conference unanimously recognized it as a congregation of the district.

For brief periods of time the pulpit of the new church was supplied by ministers from many denominational and nondenominational groups. At Thanksgiving time, 1922, two Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries discussed their experiences on the African field before the church. "At the close several purses amounting to \$150 were presented to them."<sup>5</sup> In 1924, some men from the "Brotherhood Mission" of Philadelphia related the problems they confronted in inner-city work.

The Calvary congregation observed its third anniversary on June 17, 1923. The date was also observed as the anniversary for the origins of the work in the Kensington mission by the Crofts nineteen years earlier. The day was important to the membership because DeWitt H. Miller, his wife and son, were present to begin their tenure as pastor. Bro. Miller became the first full-time pastor of the congregation. A reception was held on July 2, 1923 and two weeks later, the new pastor was chosen to be the presiding elder.

DeWitt H. Miller (1890-1974), a native of Virginia, was the son of Robert J. and Kate Bowman Miller. He was experienced as a farmer, teacher and pastor. He united with the Church of the Brethren at the Fairfax congregation in Virginia (August, 1903) and was called to the ministry by this church on July 10, 1909. He was married on September 27, 1917 to Effie E. Thomas, a lady with artistic abilities. When Bro. Miller received his Bachelor of Divinity degree at Juniata Divinity School (1923), he entered the pastorate of the Calvary congregation, ministering from June 15, 1923 till July 12, 1924. He moved from Philadelphia to Cumberland, Maryland, to assume responsibility for a mission in the new community.

D. Howard Keiper (1898- ), a recent graduate of Juniata College, was called by the congregation to minister in his first pastorate. Native of the town of Woodbury, Pennsylvania, he was baptized (January 27, 1914) and ordained to the ministry (June 20, 1920) in the Woodbury Church of the Brethren. During his pastorate in Philadelphia (1925-1929) he completed his theological education at Princeton Seminary (1928). Bro. Keiper was married to Anna Ruth Graybill of Manheim, Pennsylvania, on September 13, 1926.

The first woman to be called to the ministry in the Philadelphia churches was Julia A. Croft. In an impressive service conducted by Ross D. Murphy and D. Howard Keiper, the founder of the Bethany and Calvary churches was formally licensed as a minister in September,

1925. About the same time, Joseph W. Kiedaisch was called to the office of deacon by the church.

The foundations were laid for a strong church organization during Bro. Keiper's pastorate. A board of trustees, consisting of five members, was appointed early in his pastorate. The Sunday School organization developed an expanding Primary Department under the supervision of Lydia Kiedaisch and Margaret Fisher. The Home Department, Cradle Roll and Boy Scout organization, under the direction of Edward Rhine, reached into the homes of the community. A Mothers' Club was formed to assist families in the religious training of their young.

Anna Ruth Keiper organized a strong Girl Reserves group to promote Christian Education activities among the girls of the community. In December, 1926, the organization dressed a doll to be sent to Japan as a gift for a Japanese child. In addition, the church had three strong Christian Endeavor organizations, all active in promoting missions, relief and various Christian Endeavor projects. In 1928, for example, these groups cooperated in packing a box for the Industrial School of the Church of the Brethren at Geer, Virginia.

With a growing Church School and church, it became necessary to develop plans for building improvements. In 1927, a new electric bulletin board replaced a plain sign and the church building was painted. An active outreach ministry spurred the church's numerical growth. The Senior Christian Endeavor Society, under the leadership of Horace Maxwell, conducted evangelistic services twice each month in Harrowgate Square near to the Tioga Station of the Frankford elevated line. The pastor publicized the work of the church by issuing a monthly *Newsletter* (1927).

The congregation's interest in foreign missions was exceptionally strong. When H. Stover Kulp visited the congregation in February, 1926, an offering of \$70 was given for mission work. Self-denial envelopes, used during the Lenten season, contributed \$115 for missions.

When D. Howard Keiper accepted the call of the Woodberry (Baltimore) Church of the Brethren, the Calvary people gathered for a farewell service on August 10, 1929. Bro. Keiper was succeeded by J. H. Clawson of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, on September 1, 1929. Soon after the new pastor's arrival, the Sunday School observed a Rally Day with 309 persons present. The church advertised itself as "The Little Church With The Big Welcome."

John Henry Clawson (1904- ) was a student of the Eastern Baptist Seminary when he accepted the Philadelphia pastorate. A native of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, he united with the Greensburg Church of the Brethren (1925). He had been formerly a member of the Reformed denomination (1914-1925). He was called to the ministry by the Greensburg Church (October 31, 1926) and was ordained in 1927 while a student at Juniata College. He continued his education at the Eastern Baptist Seminary and Temple University while he ministered to the Calvary congregation. Before his ministry in the Philadelphia

area, Bro. Clawson was pastor of the Robinson Church of the Brethren. In 1930, John H. Clawson was married to Ruth Betts of Indiana County, Pennsylvania.

Bro. Clawson was active in various missions of Philadelphia. He preached at the Galilean Mission, operated by the Epicopalians; the Brotherhood Mission, sponsored by the Methodists; and the interdenominational Seaman's Institute. In addition, he conducted prayer meeting services and taught the Adult Bible Class in the Calvary Church.



*Calvary Church of the Brethren*

Bro. Clawson was pastor of the Calvary Church until 1932. During his ministry, a stone church building was constructed. The pastor did much of the manual labor and supervised the work of construction. At the time of the construction, Samuel B. and Julia A. Croft prepared a "Deed of Trust" under the date of February 5, 1930. Under this agreement, their estate was to be held intact during the lifetime of both Bro. and Sister Croft.

Under the original Deed of Trust, the Tradesmen's National Bank of Philadelphia was to receive the sum of \$12,000 in trust

"to pay the net income from time to time to the Calvary Church of the Brethren, to be used in and about the support and maintenance of said church, and for any other proper purpose as determined by the said church."

The remainder of the estate was to be given to twelve individuals and charities.

The original Deed of Trust also contained the following provision:

"In case the said church shall not then be in existence, or shall cease to be a church organization under the denomination of the Church of the Brethren, the fund shall pass to the Endowment Fund of the following: Brethren Home, Neffsville, 1/5; Children's Aid Society, Neffsville, 1/5; Juniata College, 1/5; and General Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren, 2/5."

After the new church building was completed, John H. Clawson resigned to return to Central Pennsylvania. On February 12, 1933, the church gathered for the installation of J. Grannum Mahon as pastor. Ross D. Murphy presided at the service of installation and a neighboring minister gave the charge to the congregation and pastor.

"This was a very sacred service in which Bro. Mahon, the pastor, pledged himself to God and the church in future service. Bro. Mahon has served as supply pastor at the Calvary Church for over six months, having previously been affiliated with the Methodist Church."

J. Grannum Mahon and his wife were baptized into membership of the Church of the Brethren in January, 1933. He had been granted a local preacher's license by the Methodist Episcopal Church at its Philadelphia Conference on November 26, 1928.

The years of Bro. Mahon's pastorate (1933-1948) were fruitful. The congregation completed the new building in the first year of Bro. Mahon's pastorate. Within a short time after his arrival, Bro. Mahon was advanced to the eldership (December 9, 1936) in a service conducted by Trostle P. Dick and Harvey S. Reogle. The church membership increased from seventy-five at the time he began his ministry to 323 at the time he concluded his work.

On June 10, 1940, the Deed of Trust left to the Calvary Church by Bro. and Sister Croft was amended. The amendment provided that, upon the death of the survivor of either Brother or Sister Croft, the sum of \$8,000 shall be given

"to the Tradesmens' National Bank, in trust to pay, from time to time, to the Calvary Church of the Brethren, to be used in and about the support of the maintenance of said church, and for any other proper purpose, uses and purposes as determined by the said church."

The war years (1940-1945) changed the life of the congregation. The all-out war effort in the nation drew many young men and women into industries, thus reducing regular Sunday attendances. The "man-power pinch" drew many people from their homes into factories and away from home-making. The drafting of young men also had a disruptive effect on the congregation. In 1944, out of a listed membership of 332, the Calvary Church had sixty-nine members in military service.

The church met in a series of services on November 25, 1945, to recognize their building improvements. New pews had been placed in the church auditorium at Easter-time. New stained-glass windows were placed in the auditorium. Trostle P. Dick brought a message of dedica-

tion. Ethel Ferguson, chairlady of the building and improvement committee, presented the improvements to Joseph W. Kiedaisch, chairman of the congregation's board of trustees.

The Calvary membership supported Earl E. Snader, Jr. on the China mission field. The Women's Missionary Society sponsored the purchase of a heifer on behalf of the Brethren Service program (1947). Bro. Mahon exchanged pulpits with D. Howard Keiper, pastor of the Coventry Church, to permit Bro. Keiper to speak concerning the brotherhood's Advance With Christ program (1948).

On the occasion of the church's twenty-fifth anniversary (1947), the Calvary Church paused to pay tribute to Julia A. and Samuel B. Croft, the church's founders. Joseph W. Kiedaisch related the history of the congregation. A year later, Julia A. Croft died at the age of eighty-five years (November 12, 1948). Samuel B. Croft died on January 3, 1949, at the age of ninety-one years. The Crofts are buried in the Lawnview Cemetery of Philadelphia.



*Samuel B. and Julia A.*

J. Grannum Mahon resigned as pastor of the church on August 31, 1948. He retired to the southwestern part of the United States and spent his latter years in Arizona and California. His eighteen years as pastor of the Calvary Church were years of growth for the congregation.

Henry H. Moyer became the supply minister on September 1, 1948. He labored in this capacity until 1950. During this ministry, the church established a church improvement fund (1949) and redecorated the church sanctuary by laying carpet and painting (1950). The church also

supported the relief ministries of the denomination by shipping many pounds of goods to New Windsor, Maryland.

James V. D'Amico was the summer pastor in 1951. When the church voted to continue his services as the full-time minister, he was installed as pastor on September 4, 1951. B. F. Waltz conducted the installation and Alexander A. Balden, pastor of the Waldensian Presbyterian Church of Chicago, Illinois, was the speaker at the service.

James Vincent D'Amico (1924- ) attended High School in New York City. He completed his formal training at the National Bible Institute, New York City (1942-1945), Juniata College (1947-1949) and Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Illinois (1949-1952). He was baptized (1940), licensed (1943) and ordained (1948) to the ministry by the Brooklyn Calvary Church of the Brethren. Bro. D'Amico was married to Grace Petrone of Brooklyn on August 30, 1947.

The new pastor ministered to the congregation until June, 1954, at which time he returned to Brooklyn to minister to the Calvary Church of the Brethren. Succeeding Bro. D'Amico in Philadelphia was Elwood A. Kirschner, a member of the congregation who had prepared himself for the Christian ministry. He was licensed at the Calvary Church in 1954. Bro. Kirschner labored diligently with the membership from 1954 until January 2, 1966. In recognition of his industry, he was advanced to the eldership on December 27, 1964, in a service conducted by Luke H. Brandt and John S. Landis.

Although his resignation became effective in January, 1966, Bro. Kirschner agreed to continue as pastor until a successor could be found. Eventually, he withdrew from the Church of the Brethren and became the pastor of a Baptist Church in the state of New Jersey.

The congregation chose to call Richard C. Cowley, an undenominational minister who had no previous associations with the Church of the Brethren. He was received as a member of the denomination in 1967 and was installed as pastor of the Calvary Church. He ministered to the church until it withdrew from the district and the brotherhood in 1968.

In January, 1968, the Calvary Church informed the General Offices of the brotherhood that the church council had voted to sever relationships with the Church of the Brethren. The letter is as follows:

January 11, 1968

Dear Sir,

At a regular council meeting of the Calvary Church of the Brethren, of Philadelphia, Pa., it was overwhelmingly voted that we sever our relationship with the Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Illinois.

This action was preceded by much prayer and consideration by the members of the congregation and was carried out in a spirit of real humility, realizing that this is a serious and important step. We nevertheless felt that this is what the Lord would have us do and we are reporting to you this action as a result of an official board meeting held Sunday evening, December 3, 1967.

The following reasons are given for this action:

- 1). Because of the increasing tendency toward embracing a liberal, modernistic theology;
- 2). Because of our denominational affiliation with the National Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement;
- 3). Because of the acceptance and use of higher criticism in the new Sunday School youth curriculum;
- 4). Because the church allows such modernistic plays and actions as the play 'For Heavens Sake' that was presented at the 1966 Youth Conference at Cornell University;
- 5). Because of the recent cooperation of the church in bringing Metropolitan Nikodim to this country and into our churches.

We feel that these recent trends and actions prove to us that the church is no longer following in the steps of our forefathers, and by this consistent denial of our faith, we can no longer support the church in its actions and therefore sever our relationship with you.

We are sorry to report this after so many years of fellowship but feel that we must remain true to the Bible as the Word of God and to our convictions and spiritual heritage.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Richard C. Cowley, Pastor

Clement V. Reed, Chairman of the  
Deacons

Joseph Kane, Chairman of Trustees  
John Haggerty, Chairman of the  
Severance Committee.

When this action was reported to the North Atlantic District, the district board appointed a committee to work with the Severance Committee of the Calvary Church. The district committee was composed of Wilbur A. Martin, Galen S. Young, Ralph R. Frey and Joseph M. Long. These committees met several times but no reconciliation could be achieved.

In April, 1969, through the attorney of the Calvary congregation, the church offered to purchase the church property for \$5,000. The district board rejected the offer. At a September, 1969, meeting, the North Atlantic District Board made several proposals to the congregation. The proposals were: 1). Sell the property to the congregation for \$25,000; 2). Lease the property for fifteen years with \$5,000 payable immediately; or 3). Initiate legislation to determine the ownership of the property. The Calvary congregation rejected the first two proposals.

In January, 1970, the district committee was enlarged. To the original committee were added Clifford B. Huffman, C. Wayne Zunkel and Luke H. Brandt. This enlarged committee reported to the district board on February 16, 1970. Their recommendation was that the district board should not resort to litigation in dealing with the situation, either to retain the property or to receive payment from the Calvary congregation, but should "attempt to impress upon the conscience of the church officials that they have a moral obligation to make a significant payment

of at least \$10,000 for these properties." This recommendation also suggested that \$10,000 should be a minimum payment and \$25,000 a maximum settlement for the properties.

The district conference of 1970 accepted the request of the Philadelphia Calvary Church to de-affiliate itself with the Church of the Brethren. An amendment was passed that the district board be authorized to make the property settlement for the district with the Philadelphia congregation.

On September 16, 1972, the district board voted unanimously to accept a motion prepared by counsel John R. Gibbel:

"Resolved that the Atlantic Northeast District, Church of the Brethren, successor of the North Atlantic District, sell the real estate of the Calvary Church of the Brethren consisting of the church sanctuary and Sunday School building at 1921-1925 East Venango Street and 3606 Emerald Street and the parsonage at 1107 Kenwyn Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to the Calvary Church, an independent church, for the sum of \$5,000 (five thousand dollars). The President and Vice-President and the Secretary are hereby authorized to sign the deed, affidavit and all instruments necessary to complete the transfer of the aforesaid properties. The authority of the officers shall be enforced until December 31, 1972. If the conveyance of these properties is not completed on or before December 31, 1972, all authority granted by the resolution is revoked."

The property was purchased in 1972 from the Church of the Brethren and the congregation became an independent church.

In its years as a congregation, the Calvary Church called or advanced the following persons in the Christian ministry:

September 19, 1925. Julia B. Croft called the to ministry.

1929. D. Howard Keiper advanced to the eldership.

February, 1933. J. Grannum Mahon called to the ministry.

Advanced to the eldership on December 9, 1936.

April 13, 1949. Joseph W. Kiedaisch given a permanent license to preach.

December 27, 1964. Elwood A. Kirschner advanced to the eldership. Was granted a license in 1954.

June 6, 1965. George F. Weber, Jr. was given a license to preach. Was relicensed on April 2, 1967.

The following brethren have served as elders-in-charge or moderators of the congregation:

1923-1925.--DeWitt H. Miller

1926-1937.--Ross D. Murphy

1937-1948.--J. Grannum Mahon

1948.--District Ministerial Board

1949-1951.--Benjamin F. Waltz

1951-1960.--D. Howard Keiper

1961-1964.--Frank D. Gailbraith, Jr.

1965-1968.--Wayne Smulling.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

## THE QUAKERTOWN CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



In 1733, the Great Swamp Church of the Brethren organized in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. When John Naas heard of an awakening among the people in Upper Milford Township, he made an evangelistic tour of the region. Six persons were baptized as a result of this early preaching mission. In 1735, an organization of eleven members was created for the Church of the Brethren by Peter Becker and Martin Urner.<sup>1</sup> By 1770, Morgan Edwards noted that twenty-eight persons belonged to the Great Swamp congregation in the region about Zion Hill, about thirteen miles south of Bethlehem.

The Springfield congregation and the Quakertown Church exist today as the result of these early efforts by the Brethren. The Springfield congregation, which met in house meetings prior to 1866, promoted the work in Quakertown which developed into a new congregation. The Springfield Church and the Quakertown Church met as one congregation until their separation occurred in 1936.

Between 1904 and 1908, there was a migration of Brethren into northern Bucks County from the south central and western portions of Pennsylvania. On December 22, 1908, at the request of the Brethren in the Quakertown area, the Springfield congregation purchased a small, brick chapel at 424 Juniper Street in Quakertown. This meetinghouse was known as Beulah Chapel.

On December 31, 1910, services of dedication were conducted in Quakertown for a Sunday School annex to the chapel. D. W. Kurtz and S. H. Hertzler were guest speakers for this service. The first Sunday School superintendent at this time was S. S. Lint. A note to the brotherhood announced: "This is a new field under the control of the Springfield congregation." The community in which the Brethren located was occupied by the Quakers as early as 1700. The town was laid out in a meadow which was once known as Flatland. The name was later changed to Richland and then to Quakertown. The area is still known as Richland Township.

By 1910, Quakertown had less than 4,000 inhabitants. People were attracted to the region, not simply by fertile farmland, but by the flourishing industries within the community. The town was a center for the manufacture of coaches, stoves, cigars and organs.

In the several decades of its existence, the Quakertown Church of the Brethren established a life-style which has extended to the present time. The congregation has traditionally stressed evangelism, missions, Christian Education and Brethren Service work. A record of the church for 1915 states, "Through the earnest efforts of our home preacher, W. F. Spidle (1856-1919), in almost three weeks of service five were added to the membership."<sup>3</sup> Evangelistic efforts were conducted annually except when "the Spanish influenza" of 1918 postponed them.<sup>4</sup>

In the summer of 1921, the Springfield Church conducted a Daily Vacation Bible School in the Quakertown meetinghouse. Those who taught the school saw exciting possibilities for training the young in the Christian way. Interest in such schools continued to grow until, by 1929, 142 pupils were enrolled and sixty-six of these had perfect attendance records.

The Quakertown and Springfield memberships were led by nonsalaried preachers residing within the congregation. The preaching responsibilities were shared by the presiding elder of the church. Gradually, the Springfield Church and the Quakertown membership began to select their own ministers. William J. Wadsworth, Jr. (1898-

) ministered to the Quakertown membership from June, 1926 until September, 1928. The last minister to share the preaching responsibilities at the Springfield and Quakertown houses was B. B. Ludwick (1877-1964), who ministered from September 1, 1929 until 1932. He conducted a strenuous visitation program for the church in order to clarify the membership rolls. At a council meeting on March 15, 1930, he reported that the congregation had 156 members, representing eighty-one families.<sup>5</sup>

During the period of the shared pastorate (1929-1932), B. B. Ludwick encouraged the formation of a Ladies' Aid Society (December 9, 1929). This organization, with Mrs. Ludwick as its first president, was active in the preparation of quilts and comforters. The women met regularly at the Quakertown community on Monday evenings at the home of Cora Hershberger.

The first official step in the separation of the Quakertown Church from the Springfield congregation was made on June 18, 1932. At this quarterly council meeting, the two meetinghouses decided to select their own pastors. Henry H. Moyer was elected to minister to the Springfield house and B. B. Ludwick and Clarence F. Holsopple were chosen to serve the Quakertown house. Bro. Ludwick ministered to the congregation until September 1, 1935, after which he moved to Markleysburg in Western Pennsylvania. Clarence F. Holsopple, a licensed minister, was ordained to the full ministry in May, 1933. After Bro. Ludwick moved, Bro. Holsopple continued to minister to the congregation.

The Quakertown Church of the Brethren officially separated from the Springfield congregation on March 31, 1936. The memberships voted to petition the district conference for status as separate congregations. The conference recognized the Quakertown Church on April 23, 1936, and seated Simon S. Lint and Russell Rotenberger as the first delegates. Harvey S. Reogle was elected the presiding elder and Clarence F. Holsopple continued as pastor until the fall of 1936.

Jesse Herbert Miller (1915- ), a student of Elizabethtown College, began to minister part-time to the Quakertown Church on September 1, 1936. At a homecoming service on October 11th, Bro. Miller was presented with a basket of flowers and was officially welcomed into the church. J. Herbert Miller was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the son of Jesse Herbert and Louise Rinehart Miller. He united with the Church of the Brethren in 1925 at the Fulton Avenue Church of Baltimore. In 1923, the First Church of the Brethren of Baltimore licensed him to the ministry and ordained him in the following year. Bro. Miller graduated from the Forest Park High School (1933) and completed his degree at Elizabethtown College in 1937.

The annual rally and homecoming service became a tradition at the Quakertown Church. On October 3, 1927, services were conducted at the morning and afternoon services with Trostle P. Dick and Norman W. Paullin as guest speakers. On this day, the congregation recognized Berry Hottle, the oldest member of the Springfield congregation and Sister Agar, the oldest member of the Quakertown Church.

The youth of the congregation established a custom of conducting Saturday night evangelistic meetings in the community. In 1938, some of the guest evangelistic speakers included Norman Frederick, Reuben Brumbaugh, David Cassel, Jesse Whitacre, Linford Rotenberger, Milton C. Swigart, James H. Beahm, Chauncey F. Trimmer and J. Herbert Miller. In 1938, Linford Rotenberger and J. Herbert Miller conducted evangelistic meetings for a three-week period in a factory

building at Trumboursville, Pennsylvania.

Through much of its history, the congregation has offered a diversified program. Bro. Miller developed the fellowship through a regular program of visitation even during the years he was attending seminary at Princeton Theological School (1937-1939). The church displayed a fine numerical growth and youth work flourished. Guest speakers in the congregation included furloughed missionaries, district and brotherhood leaders and interdenominational workers. In 1939, Paul Voronaeff, a young Russian, described his exile and the concentration camps in his homeland. John Barwick visited the congregation and shared his slides on the Holy Land (1929). In 1936, Charles D. Bonsack spoke of the work of the Church of the Brethren in China's mission field.

In the summer of 1939, Bro. Miller and his wife were in residence in the congregation. He was married on June 3, 1939, to Ruth Elizabeth Carper, of Palmyra, Pennsylvania. During this summer, the pastor made his decision to complete his education at Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. Ralph H. Jones, the presiding elder of the congregation, ministered to the Quakertown membership in the fall of 1939. Bro. Miller accepted the pastorate of the Spring Creek congregation in Hershey, Pennsylvania, on July 1, 1940.

In the fall of 1940, John R. Justice, of Hagerstown, Maryland, was installed as the new pastor. The congregation purchased a parsonage for the pastor and his family. George W. Landis conducted the service of dedication for the parsonage on February 2, 1941. On this same day, a service of dedication was conducted for the new baptistry in the church. Bro. Justice and his wife became acquainted with the membership as they came to an "Open House" at the parsonage on Sunday afternoon, February 23, 1941. During the pastorate of Bro. Justice (1940-1944), the congregation gave support to Edward T. Angeny on the China mission field and the youth continued to conduct successful gospel services each Saturday evening in the Quakertown Sales Auction building.

April 30, 1944, was a special day in the life of the congregation. Trostle P. Dick and Irwin S. Hoffer were guests of the congregation to install S. Elmore Byler as the new pastor. The membership burned the mortgage on the church parsonage and remained to fellowship at the noon meal.

Harper S. Snavely (1892-1974) succeeded Bro. Byler as the pastor in July, 1945. Bro. Snavely had been licensed to the ministry in the Spring Creek congregation (December 23, 1923) and was ordained in the same congregation on September 6, 1924. He was advanced to the eldership in the Meyersdale Church of Eastern Maryland (August 31, 1931) before he began his pastoral work in the Carlisle Church of the Brethren (1931-1945).

In the next several years, Bro. Snavely led the congregation in a series of outreach ministries. In December, 1945, the congregation met in a fellowship meal to honor its returning servicemen. College stu-

dents and returning service personnel fellowshipped at the church with their relatives. In these postwar years, the members were active in shipping seeds to overseas families (1946) and heifers to help rehabilitate farmers in Europe. The congregation invited A. G. Breidenstine to speak to the first Men's Work Organization banquet at the church in 1946. The youth chartered a bus on November 10, 1946, in order to attend a youth rally in the Calvary (Italian) Church in Brooklyn. In January, 1947, Bro. Snavely enlisted the services of all the ministers of the Quakertown community in collecting and loading relief goods on the New Windsor truck.

Monroe Crouse Good succeeded Bro. Snavely as the part-time pastor in December, 1947. He is the son of Monroe F. Good of Reinholds, Pennsylvania, and a graduate of Elizabethtown College. He was married to Ada Ziegler, daughter of Abraham and Rhoda Ziegler, of Myerstown, Pennsylvania.

The mission interest of the congregation remained strong. The Men's Fellowship began to support the work of Ira Petrie on the Nigerian field (1947). The annual Harvest Home and homecoming offering, designated for mission work, amounted to \$300 (1948). The Vacation Bible School of 1948 made checkerboards and stuffed animals to be sent to overseas children. In 1949, John B. and Mildred H. Grimley presented a program in the congregation related to their mission work.

With its strong community evangelism approach, the Quakertown Church sponsored regular radio broadcasts over station W B U X in 1949. It also supported regular camp meetings at Sellersville in cooperation with the Springfield congregation. Rufus Bucher and J. A. Robinson were preachers in 1949 at the two-week services conducted at the Highland Park camp meeting grounds. The cooperation and support of neighboring churches made these meetings very successful.

In the fall of 1949, pastor Good and his wife Ada entered Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia to prepare for overseas mission work. Bro. Good continued to serve the church on a part-time basis. In the meantime, the church voted to support Mabel Claypool, a missionary to Bulsar, India (1950). Since the congregation was supporting two missionaries, the missionary offerings were often divided between the India and the African fields.

Monroe C. Good closed his pastoral services in the summer of 1951. He moved to Chicago, Illinois, to complete his seminary training. For a period of time, Warren Ritter, who had been called to the ministry on April 19, 1948 by the congregation, served his home church as pastor. He was ordained on August 26, 1951, with B. F. Waltz and Glen E. Norris officiating.

Luke Hoffer Brandt (1925- ) was installed as the pastor of the congregation on January 13, 1952. Bro. Brandt and his family moved into the church parsonage late in November, 1951. The son of Roy Shearer and Anna Hoffer Brandt of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, Bro. Brandt was baptized at the Conewago Church of the Brethren (November 12, 1937). His home congregation licensed (1946) and ordained

(1948) him to the Christian ministry. On April 12, 1946, he was united in marriage to Anna Lucille Lehman of Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

Under the leadership of Luke H. Brandt, the Quakertown Church began a sound growth in membership and stewardship. In August, 1953, the church took steps toward expanding its facilities by appointing a building committee. The congregation decided to contribute financial support for Monroe C. Good and his wife as they entered their new work on the African mission field (1952).

The Quakertown Church has contributed a number of young people to Brethren Volunteer Service work. Sylvia and Wayne Hixson offered their services to the brotherhood: Sylvia served as an exchange student in Europe (1960) and Wayne was a Brethren Volunteer Service worker in the North Avenue Community Center in Fresno, California. An early Brethren Service worker was Gerald Ludwick, who had been licensed to the ministry by the Quakertown Church in 1955. While he was serving in Europe, he lost his life in a mountain-climbing accident on May 16, 1957. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Blondell Ludwick of Perkasie, Pennsylvania.

A report of this tragedy came to the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren in 1957. The report said in part:

“Our representatives in Europe, in their Annual Meeting held at Reith, Austria, felt a strong spiritual oneness with all the churches around the world. In the midst of their consultations together, a very serious announcement had to be made. Gerald Ludwick was lost in the mountains. This was the first experience with death among our European workers. We quote from their letter: ‘From that moment on our conversations and discussions became far more serious and meaningful. It has been impossible to put into words the personal and group decisions (for greater dedication) that came out of this experience’.”<sup>8</sup>

In preparation for the changes which were coming to the life of the congregation, the church council adopted a new constitution and by-laws in 1956. Late in 1956, an enlarged building committee proposed plans for a new church structure. Members of the church viewed the proposals from a series of slides presented to the quarterly church council in 1957. The congregation made further preparations for the challenges of the future by inviting Donald L. Robinson to direct an Every-Member Canvass, and by adopting the unified budget system of giving to the church through a single offering on each Sunday.

During its efforts to construct a new church building, the Quakertown membership maintained a strong outreach ministry. It cooperated in the district project, “Money For Seeds” (1954) and gave offerings for the new work which the Brethren developed among the Navajo Indians of New Mexico (1953). The membership increased from 162 persons in 1952 to 191 in 1964. The stewardship of the congregation increased correspondingly.

The church membership has been composed of people of diverse religious backgrounds. Members came from Roman Catholic and Mennon-

ite backgrounds as well as from other denominations. The congregation has continued to require the rebaptism of all persons who have never been immersed.



*Quakertown Church of the Brethren*

Ground-breaking services for a new church building were held on March 8, 1959, on the outskirts of Quakertown on the Trumbaurville Road. John S. Landis, the moderator of the congregation, conducted the service. A new building, costing \$125,000, was erected and was ready for use on August 14, 1960. On August 21, 1960, seven persons were received into membership at the new church by the ordinance of baptism.

A new brick colonial-style church building was dedicated on Sunday, September 25, 1960. J. Herbert Miller, a former pastor, returned to address the congregation. A Saturday evening service, with district guests, was addressed by Wilbur A. Martin.

In order to discover its own potential for growth, the congregation cooperated in a community-wide visitation (1961). During a period of heightened racial tension in the nation, the church council acted to receive people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds into full church membership. The new church building soon became a center for numerous district events, including the North Atlantic District Conference (1961) and the District Adult Rally (1964) with Senator Richard Schweicker as the speaker.

After fifteen years of service to the church, Luke H. Brandt resigned as pastor, effective August 31, 1966. During his ministry, the congregation grew in its loyalty to the ideals of the Church of the Brethren and found new life in outreach ministries. For a period of time succeeding Bro. Brandt, Cyrus B. Krall served as the supply pastor.

Jerome Schuster (1935- ) of Wisconsin, began his ministry to the congregation on September 1, 1967. Bro. Schuster was born in Bloomer, Wisconsin, the son of Wenzel and Helen Ellingson Schuster. He advanced his education at Bethany Bible Training School (1961, 1962) and the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute (1969). He united with the Church of the Brethren at Mondovi, Wisconsin, in the Chippewa Valley Church (1955), where he was licensed (1959) and ordained (1967) to the ministry. On December 27, 1956, he was married to Donna M. Davis of Mondovi, Wisconsin. Bro. Schuster ministered in Quakertown until August, 1969, after which he became pastor at the County Line Church in Western Pennsylvania.

Patrick Chaffin (1941- ), a former assistant in the Philadelphia First Church, became pastor of the Quakertown Church on August 31, 1969. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, he is the son of Walter Magni and Mary Duka Chaffin. He came to the Quakertown congregation after graduating from Bethany Theological Seminary. He was licensed (1966) and ordained (August 3, 1969) to the ministry in the Philadelphia First Church. On August 8, 1964, he married Floy Z. Meyer of the Indian Creek congregation. Bro. Chaffin ministered to the Quakertown Church from 1969 to 1971.

On April 4, 1971, Conway E. Bennett became the part-time pastor of the congregation. The son of Olie Bennett of Circleville, West Virginia, he was born on July 20, 1921. He was baptized, licensed (1948) and ordained to the ministry (1957) in the Little Swatara congregation of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. By March 4, 1974, all the indebtedness on the church parsonage had been paid and a service of mortgage-burning was conducted on June 23, 1974, with Luke H. Brandt as the speaker. Morten Holsinger recounted the history of the congregation. Bro. Bennett completed his work in June, 1974.

On August 29, 1974, Paul H. Boll (1933- ) was installed as the full-time pastor of the Quakertown Church. The son of Norman and Naomi Boll of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, the new pastor was licensed and



*Paul H. Boll*

ordained to the ministry in the Mohler's congregation of Eastern Pennsylvania. He attended Messiah College, Bethany Bible School, Shippensburg State College and Bridgewater College (B.A., 1974). He has held pastorates at the Northfork and Greenland congregations of the First District of West Virginia; the Shippensburg Church of Southern Pennsylvania; the Valley Central United Church of Christ and the Cedar Grove Church of Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. He is married to Carol A. Kaufman, the daughter of Orval and May Kaufman of Warriors Mark, Pennsylvania.

In the years the Quakertown Church has existed as a separate congregation, the following people have been called or advanced in the Christian ministry:

Linford James Rotenberger. Licensed September 27, 1937.  
Ordained, June 28, 1938.

Maynard George. Licensed September 20, 1938.

Stephen Margush. Licensed March 29, 1942.

Joseph Margush. Licensed March 29, 1942.

Warren Ritter. Licensed April 19, 1948. Ordained August 26, 1951.

Gerald Fosbenner. Licensed December 13, 1948.

Donald C. Ream. Licensed December 13, 1948.

Clarence E. Quay, Jr. Licensed in 1952.

Gerald Ludwick. Licensed September 13, 1953.

Monroe C. Good. Advanced to the eldership in 1956.

Barry Shaffer. Licensed September 10, 1962.

Ronald E. Ludwick. Licensed September 10, 1962.

The following elders have presided over the business meetings of the church:

Harvey S. Replogle. 1936-1940.  
Ralph R. Jones. 1940-1948.  
Glen E. Norris. 1948-1952.  
John S. Landis. 1952-

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

## THE DREXEL HILL CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

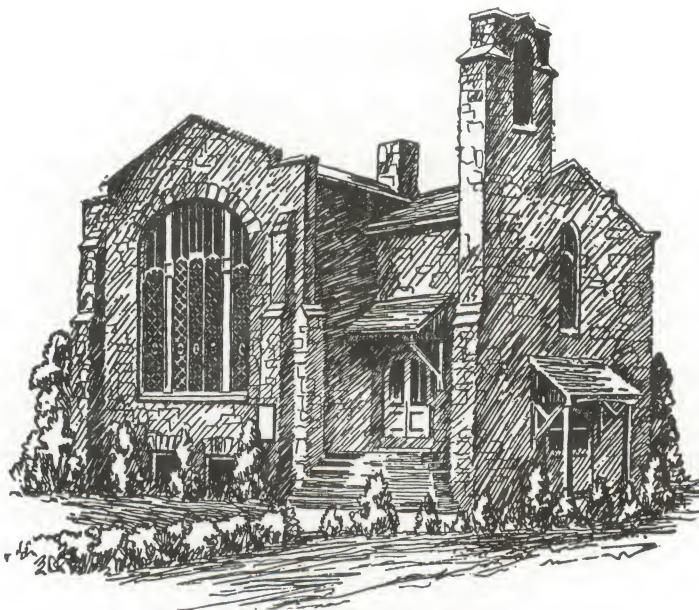
In the closing years of the 1940s, the brotherhood awakened to the need for a more active church extension program. The Orlando Annual Conference (1947) inaugurated the Advance With Christ movement, which encouraged people to become more vitally alert to religious needs at home and abroad. The church was stimulated to act on behalf of the new communities which were rising in the suburban fringes of the nation's large cities.

The Church of the Brethren had no churches in southwest Philadelphia. The activity of the church was centered primarily in the northern reaches of the city. Some members of the denomination, residing in the Chester-Media-Swarthmore area, began to appeal to the District Mission Board to take action to establish a church in the section beyond southwest Philadelphia. Galen S. Young, living in Chester, Pennsylvania, made such an appeal for action as early as 1945. The district board felt the time was not ripe for such church extension because an insufficient number of Brethren lived in the area. When the appeal was renewed in 1950, the board gave it full consideration.

Members of the District Mission Board surveyed various communities in Delaware and Chester Counties. In the meantime, the Brethren of the area established monthly meetings in the home of Galen S. Young at Bullen's Lane and Providence Road in Chester. Members of the District Mission Board and other district ministers shared preaching responsibilities in these Sunday afternoon gatherings. By advertising in a local newspaper and by sending postal card invitations, the original worshippers increased their number from eight persons to about thirty-five. For approximately a year, these meetings formed a fellowship of Brethren in suburban Philadelphia. The Mission Board reported in 1951, "We believe the church will become a reality in the near future."

In the winter of 1952-1953, Levi K. Ziegler, fieldman for the Eastern Region, conducted a survey of all known Brethren living in the area to determine the potential for a church. Working with Bro. Ziegler were Galen S. Young, Harold Larsen, James E. Leathery, Callene Shumaker, Roy Shumaker and Ernest Lewis. Calls were made on fifty-one families in eighteen communities. Bro. Ziegler reported that there was sufficient interest to warrant the establishment of a new church. He submitted this report to the District Mission Board and to the General Brotherhood Board.

A place of worship for the new fellowship became available in the spring of 1953. The Drexel Hill Baptist Church, of the American Baptist Convention, was seeking to relocate to alleviate its crowded conditions. The District Mission Board, after consultation with district and brotherhood officials, determined that the site would provide the Brethren with an excellent opportunity for growth. In the meantime,



*Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren*

members continued to organize their fellowship at business sessions conducted in private homes. On November 30, 1952, in the home of Galen S. Young, the group first called itself the "Delaware County Church of the Brethren." It decided to employ Donald H. Shank as the first pastor. On March 15, 1953, the first baptisms of the new fellowship were performed in the Germantown Church of the Brethren.

The first payment toward the purchase of the Drexel Hill Baptist Church buildings and grounds was made in May, 1953. The property consisted of a beautiful stone church sanctuary, two adjoining buildings and a parsonage. The purchase was made possible by a \$15,000 grant from the General Brotherhood Board. The new church site and buildings were purchased for \$55,000 by the North Atlantic District Mission Board. At the time of the purchase, this board was constituted of Benjamin F. Waltz, Eli K. Stoltzfus, Alvin S. Alderfer, B. Franklin Hottel and Philip R. Markley.

Galen Sheirich Young (1912- ) was elected to be the first moderator of the new congregation. The son of David Gibble and Elizabeth Decker Young of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, he prepared for a career in osteopathic medicine. He united with the Church of the Brethren at the Mountville congregation (1924) and has been active in the North Atlantic District since he began his formal training in Philadelphia in 1931. From 1945 until 1952, he was an active member of the Philadelphia District Mission Board. From 1952 to 1969, he was a member of the North Atlantic District Board of Administration. In June, 1937, he married Jessie Maguin, a registered nurse of the Philadelphia area.



*Galen S. Young, Moderator*

Donald Hoffman Shank (1923- ) became the pastor of the Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren on July 1, 1953. A recent graduate of Bethany Biblical Seminary (B.D., 1953), he came to the church as a minister with business experience. A native of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, he was born the son of Samuel Lesher and Ruth Hoffman Shank. He graduated from the Waynesboro High School (1941), Shippensburg State College (1950) and followed graduate work at the Eastern Baptist Seminary (1959-1960). He was called to the ministry (1950) and ordained (1952) at the Waynesboro Church. On November 26, 1943, he was married to Gwyneth Smith of Waynesboro.

The new congregation took possession of the church property in August, 1953. The first worship service was conducted on July 19, 1953, with twenty-five persons in attendance. It was not until September 17, 1953, that regular church services were begun and a Church school was organized. The Drexel Hill congregation shared the church building with the Baptists until March, 1954. The congregation showed splendid growth in a community which already had seven other Protestant church houses. By the time A. C. Baugher delivered the dedication address for the newly-acquired building (January 17, 1954), there were eighty persons in regular attendance. Nevin H. Zuck conducted an evangelistic meeting following the services of dedication during which time ten new members were received into the fellowship.

During the winter and spring of 1953-1954, a community religious census was made by the pastor and members of the Drexel Hill Church.

The first lovefeast and communion service was held on January 24, 1954. A local newspaper, *The Chester Times*, reported on March 10, 1954, "Brethren Make Settlement For Drexel Hill Church." The article said in part, "The building which changed hands yesterday was built about forty years ago for the Baptist congregation." By the fall of 1954, the membership had grown to fifty-seven. The men and women organized into active fellowships and a Christian Service Board was ministering to the needs of people within the church and the community.

A Visitation Evangelism program was used by the church in 1954-1955. It did not meet with immediate success because many people asked, "What does the Church of the Brethren believe? What is the church like?" Bro. Shank commented on this experience in evangelism:

"It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I look back on these eight years of pastoral work (1953-1961) and what was accomplished in terms of community outreach. I was thrilled that it became an extremely successful effort to enlist people from the community into the Church of the Brethren. These were people who were totally unaware and unfamiliar with who the Brethren were and what they were doing."<sup>1</sup>

Donald H. Shank further recalled his experiences in the church:

"Of the seventy-five families within our fellowship, thirty are from completely non-Brethren backgrounds. They had no knowledge of the Church of the Brethren, what it was or what it believed, prior to the time when they began worshipping with us. These people are making a vital contribution within the fellowship and are coming to have a deep love for the church. Our 'peculiar doctrines' have not been a deterring factor in the ministry of the church in our community."<sup>2</sup>

In the years since its organization, the facilities of the Drexel Hill Church have been made available frequently for district functions. On March 4, 1956, a district rally of youth convened at the church to hear Robert McFadden speak of his experiences in European summer camps. The local youth published a paper called *Progress* to keep the membership and the community informed of the church's ministries. On October 30, 1960, the church invited Ralph W. Schlosser to be present for its mortgage-burning ceremony. The \$30,000 the congregation borrowed was completely repaid.

Donald F. Durnbaugh (1927- ) and his wife Hedwig Raschka Durnbaugh were active in the Drexel Hill congregation for several years while he completed his doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D, 1960). On November 17, 1957, the Drexel Hill Church licensed him to the Christian ministry. During his tour of duty in Europe on behalf of Brethren Volunteer Service (1949-1951) and refugee work on behalf of the Brethren Service Commission (1953-1956), Bro. Durnbaugh was able to conduct considerable research for the 250th anniversary year volume, *European Origins of the Brethren* (1958).

After eight years of energetic ministry to the congregation, Donald H. Shank resigned (1961) to assume the pastorate of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Illinois. In his service to the new suburban church of Philadelphia, he helped it to grow to nearly 220 members with a solid financial base and a strong program of nurture and witness.

Kenneth L. Franklin came from Rouzerville, Pennsylvania, to promote the church program. He began his ministry at Drexel Hill on September 1, 1962, and was installed by Roy S. Forney and Lester M. Rosenberger. Kenneth L. Franklin (1931- ) was born near Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the son of Paul W. and Della Williams Franklin. He was a graduate of Elizabethtown College and Eastern Baptist Seminary. Uniting with the Church of the Brethren at Huntsdale (1947), he was licensed (1952) and ordained (1955) to the Christian ministry in the Huntsdale Church of the Brethren. He had been pastor of the Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren (1955-1958) and the Rouzerville Church of the Brethren (1958-1962) prior to his work in the Drexel Hill congregation. On June 6, 1952, he was married to Freda I. Thumma of Newville, Pennsylvania.

Although the congregation had fine physical facilities on Garrett Road, the Sunday School facilities were inadequate. The original property purchased by the congregation consisted of a stone church, a good Moehler organ, a baptistry, a large basement and a sturdy stone and stucco parsonage. The one-story Sunday School building adjoining the property was inadequate. On June 2, 1963, the church council approved a plan for the construction of a modern Christian Education building.

Ground was broken for the educational unit on September 22, 1963. When the work was completed in June, 1964, ten classrooms, a pastor's study, an all-purpose fellowship hall, a kitchen and lavatory facilities had been added to the church property. The new building was 100 feet by 45 feet in dimensions and was two stories in height.

When Kenneth L. Franklin assumed the pastorate at Thurmont, Maryland, on September 1, 1964, the congregation called Warren S. Kissinger to provide pastoral leadership. Formerly pastor of the Windber Church of the Brethren (1953-1957), the Carlisle Church (1957-1960), and a member of the Juniata College faculty (1960-1964), he served the Drexel Hill congregation for six years.

Warren Stauffer Kissinger (1922- ) was born at Akron, Pennsylvania, the son of Howard Elmer and Anna Adams Kissinger. He graduated from Ephrata High School (1940), Elizabethtown College (1950), Yale Divinity School (1953) and Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary (1959). While pastor of the Drexel Hill Church, he attended Drexel University in Philadelphia (1967-1969). Bro. Kissinger united with the Church of the Brethren at Lancaster, Pennsylvania (1940) and was licensed (1946) and ordained (1947) to the ministry at the Akron Church of the Brethren. On September 1, 1951, he married Jean Thelma Young, formerly of Telford, Pennsylvania.

Although Bro. Kissinger was initially employed on a full-time agreement, he arranged with the congregation to accept part-time employment as pastor. During his ministry, the church building was used by various community groups including fellowship dinners, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Recovery Incorporated and occasionally as the voting site for the community. A district meeting convened in the church on October 21, 1967. The membership was rather widely scattered and very few members resided in the immediate community.

Warren S. Kissinger terminated his work on August 31, 1970. He became the subject cataloguer in the field of religion at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. Later, he accepted the pastorate of the Dranesville Church of the Brethren in Virginia (1970- ).

John William Lowe, Jr. (1944- ), a recent graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary (1970, B.D.), assumed the pastoral duties at the church on September 1, 1970. Bro. Lowe was born at Hanover, Pennsylvania, the son of John William and Katherine Kline Lowe. The Drexel Hill congregation voted to approve his ordination and the service of ordination was conducted on November 25, 1970. Bro. Lowe is married to Pamela Kay Brubaker of Ohio.

Bro. Lowe concluded his work with the congregation in 1972 in order to become the youth director of the Green Tree Church of the Brethren.

In succeeding months, the pulpit of the church was supplied with visiting ministers. Berkey E. Knavel, a former district pastor and a resident of Norristown, Pennsylvania, became the supply-pastor of the congregation in 1972 and led the membership in an upsurge of life.

In the brief course of its existence, the Drexel Hill Church has had only one moderator in charge of the affairs of the church. He has been Galen S. Young, who was active in promoting the work of the Church of the Brethren in southwest Philadelphia. The church has also called to the ministry Donald F. Durnbaugh (November 17, 1957) and advanced John W. Lowe, Jr., to the full ministry (November 25, 1970).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

## PAOLI-IMMANUEL CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



In the 1950s, the North Atlantic District began to explore new areas for church extension. The brotherhood was keenly aware that a strategy for urban church promotion was essential. The 1951 Annual Conference urged districts to establish new and strong home mission programs to preserve the Brethren who were caught in migrating populations.<sup>1</sup> The program was also necessary to meet the needs of the numerous unchurched people in the developing urban regions. The District Mission Board explored many locations for possible church extension.

An Annual Conference committee in 1953 reported its findings concerning "the conditions and problems of our urban churches."<sup>2</sup> It suggested that "the newest and most apparent opportunities for the church today are around the bulging edges of growing cities." It also suggested that boards which planned to inaugurate a new work should keep in mind "the potential assistance of Brethren residing in these communities."

The Eastern District of Pennsylvania, meeting in the Chiques congregation in 1957, authorized the district board to cooperate with the North Atlantic District in a church extension project in the Paoli-Newtown area (1957). The comity approval for beginning a church in the area was granted in the same year by the Greater Philadelphia Council of Churches. The Eastern District offered a non-interest bearing five-year loan to the North Atlantic District in the amount of \$45,000. Within a brief time, the Eastern District converted the loan into an outright grant. The Committee on Church Extension for the North Atlantic District recommended to the combined district boards the purchase of a plot of five acres from a site located along the Buttonwood Road near to the Paoli-Newtown Square highway and three miles south of Paoli.

On June 18, 1959, the joint meeting of the Eastern and North Atlantic

District boards purchased a plot of ground in Easttown Township, Chester County. Five and six-tenths acres of land were purchased for the sum of \$22,492. About the time of the purchase, a new highway was constructed to the western front of the property.

District ministers cooperated in conducting monthly meetings in the area during the year 1958-1959. Contacts were made by visitors with known Brethren residing in the area.

The Mission and Church Extension Commission proposed that a minister be found who could serve the interests of the Germantown Church and the developing fellowship in the Paoli-Newtown section. On July 15, 1959, Donald Eugene Leiter (1932- ), former pastor of the Snake Spring congregation of Middle Pennsylvania, moved into the parsonage at Germantown. A native of Ashland, Ohio, and a graduate of Manchester College (B.A., 1954) and Bethany Biblical Seminary (M. Div., 1958), Bro. Leiter served as pastor in Germantown and Paoli-Newtown. In his earliest visits, he said he found ten Brethren families residing in the area of Paoli-Newtown. At the time the work was inaugurated, the question was posed as to whether Brethren could serve individuals who were residing in high-income suburban areas.

The District Church Extension Commission received permission from the United Presbyterian Church of Paoli to use its church building for Sunday evening services. A fine spirit of cooperation between the Presbyterian Church and the Brethren was noted by a local newspaper account:

"The United Presbyterian Church of Paoli has been very cooperative in helping to establish this new church in the community. It has graciously given the use of its facilities to the Church of the Brethren for meetings since 1958. Presently, the new fellowship meets in the Presbyterian Church sanctuary each Sunday evening at 7:30 P.M.'s' Regular Sunday evening services began in the Presbyterian Church on October 1, 1961, and continued through April 15, 1962, with an average attendance of eighteen persons.

Donald E. Leiter began to give full-time service to the Paoli Fellowship on September 1, 1961. The Missions and Church Extension Commission purchased a parsonage at 444 Black Swan Lane in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, at a cost of \$21,000. The pastor and his wife, the former Crystal Berkey, moved with their family into the parsonage on August 22, 1961, and a service of dedication was conducted for it on October 15th.

When it was known that the United Presbyterian Church of Paoli planned to move into a new structure at another location, the district considered the purchase of the building. After thorough discussion, the decision was made to build a new church structure at the site on Buttonwood Road. Ground-breaking services were held for the first unit on April 30, 1961. The actual construction of the building did not begin until November, 1961. The cornerstone laying ceremonies were conducted by Donald L. Robinson on June 10, 1962.

Beginning on April 22, 1962, regular morning church services for the

Paoli Fellowship were conducted at the church parsonage. For the next four months, the attendance at these services averaged twenty-seven persons. The first services in the new church building were held on September 9, 1962, with fifty-five worshippers present.

The first unit of the Paoli-Immanuel Church of the Brethren was dedicated at 3 P.M. on September 23, 1962. Nevin H. Zuck brought the message to the people who gathered to view the new \$175,000 building. The church project was unique in that it represented an investment of the General Brotherhood, the two cooperating districts and the membership of the Paoli-Newtown Fellowship. Churches of the North Atlantic District shared in providing some of the furnishings. The Germantown congregation gave a pulpit in memory of B. F. Waltz; the Drexel Hill Church provided a communion table with communion appointments; and the Norristown Church gave a table in memory of J. Harold Harley.

The Paoli-Newtown Fellowship conducted its first council meeting in May, 1963. A report states that the average attendance at worship services was sixty-six. On December 22, 1963, fifty-four charter members were recognized at the service. Donald E. Leiter addressed the morning audience on the theme, "Immanuel-God With Us." Moderator Galen S. Young presided at the afternoon council meeting for the recognition of the charter membership and for the adoption of a church constitution. The day was climaxed with a lovefeast and communion service. In 1964, the new congregation was formally recognized by the North Atlantic District.

The following members were chartered in the Paoli-Newtown congregation:

Ethel H. Beahm	George O. Loughin
Edward L. Beahm	Marian L. Loughin
Leon M. Bender	Elvin Z. Martin
Dorothy T. Bender	Mary Jane Martin
Helen P. Billhime	Ralph T. Moore
Arthur E. Britton	Ruth Ann McCauley
Margaret H. Britton	Elva Z. Myers
Francis R. Cavalati	Elizabeth H. Otter
Lester Davidson	John L. Painter
Jane S. Davidson	Marian E. Painter
Francis M. Davis	Donald E. Palmer
Gary S. Dunmire	Patricia B. Palmer
Edith M. Dunmire	Kenneth D. Rogers
Dominic A. Fiorentino, Jr.	Nancy G. Rogers
Rebecca W. Fiorentino	Lanta A. Sholley
Clair W. Graver	Adora Sholley
Mary K. Graver	Eugene M. Smith
Homer R. Knieriem	Jo Ann I. Smith
Inez R. Knieriem	Edgar R. Sollenberger
Donald R. Knieriem	Arlene P. Sollenberger

John H. Kochel	Paul E. Tubbs
Kathryn E. Kochel	Doris G. Tubbs
Barbara Jean Kochel	Richard B. Waltz
John Marvin Kochel	Diana K. Waltz
Charles E. Langham	William E. Wimble
Edna C. Langham	Ruth R. Wimble

Edward W. Zug, Jr.

Elizabeth D. Zug

During the next few years, the Paoli-Immanuel Church grew. In 1962-1963, the church membership was listed at twenty-three families and forty-one members. In 1963-1964, the membership increased to thirty families and fifty-four persons. The congregation's growth reached its peak in 1965-1966 with a membership of eighty-four.

Donald E. Leiter terminated his pastorate in August, 1966. He was succeeded in the work by John B. Grimley, recently-returned from the Nigerian mission field. John Bechtel Grimley (1915- ) was a resident of the North Atlantic District, having been baptized (1925), licensed (1937) and ordained (1938) to the Christian ministry in the Green Tree congregation. He was married to Mildred May Hess, of Collingswood, New Jersey, in 1939. John and Mildred Grimley served as missionaries to Nigeria for the Church of the Brethren from 1945 until 1966. Bro. Grimley began his work on September 1, 1966 and concluded it in August, 1972.

The congregation was new, small and interested in expanding into the life of the surrounding community. It became the home of a Boy Scout Troop and the center for a Montessori School which ministered to the community in a new educational venture. The church building also became a center for numerous fellowship meals and recreational meetings. "Our cooperation with the black community, the youth festivals and the drill team all helped to make the community aware of our concern for the promotion of good relationships for young and old alike."<sup>4</sup>

The slow and uncertain growth of the new congregation gave the district board much cause for concern. Although the membership was loyal, it remained small in numbers. In 1969, fifty-four members were listed. The chairman of the Paoli-Immanuel Church board reported to the North Atlantic District Board concerning the church and its future. He indicated that the community in which the Brethren located was non-Brethren oriented. The lovefeast service was not readily acceptable to the residents of this suburban community. Although the church continued to be active in presenting a peace witness, social action program and pastoral witness, the impact seemed minimal.

Pastor Grimley suggested that a number of factors opposed the rapid growth of the church. First, the community itself experienced a heavy turn-over of population. Frequently a family won to the church moves to another location. Secondly, the community is affluent, appealing primarily to upper class families. The church parsonage is two miles from the church since it was difficult to find a property with a reasonable price in the immediate community. Finally, the membership

of the congregation resides at considerable distances from the church. All of these factors have made substantial church growth difficult.<sup>5</sup>



*C. Albert and Hazel Guyer*

C. Albert Guyer (1926- ) became the new pastor on September 1, 1972. A former pastor of Pennsylvania, Ohio and the state of Colorado, he was a native of New Enterprise, Pennsylvania. The son of John Lawrence and Ethel Davis Guyer of New Enterprise, he was called to the ministry (1945) and ordained (1946) by the Koontz Church of the Brethren. In 1949, he was married to Hazel Irene Beard of Westminster, Maryland. In the spring of 1975, Bro. Guyer resigned to embark upon a career in hospital chaplaincy.

The Paoli Church of the Brethren continues to give its witness to peace, service and social action in a section which was once known as "The Main Line." It seeks to serve a community which has been unacquainted with the unique ministry of the Church of the Brethren.

In the short time the church has existed, it has not called anyone to the licensed or ordained ministry. Lanta A. Sholley, Jr., a former pastor of the Oakdale Church of the Brethren of Western Pennsylvania, moved his certificate of membership to the Paoli-Immanuel congregation in 1962 and, with his wife, was a charter member of the church.

In the brief years of its ministry, the congregation has been led by the following moderators:

Galen S. Young, 1962-1970

W. Dean Crouse, 1971-1973

W. Warren Shoemaker, 1974-

## APPENDIX I

## NORTH ATLANTIC DISTRICT CONFERENCES

DATES	PLACE	MODERATOR
May 11, 1911	Germantown	S. R. Zug convened the meeting until J. T. Myers was elected moderator.
September 28, 1911	Brooklyn First	J. Kurtz Miller
September 23-26, 1912	Green Tree	T. Rodney Coffman
October 27-30, 1913	Coventry	J. Kurtz Miller
October 25-29, 1914	Philadelphia First	M. C. Swigart
October 28, 1915	Parker Ford	J. Kurtz Miller
May 9, 1916	Green Tree	J. P. Hetric
October 26, 1916	Germantown	J. P. Hetric
October 25, 1917	Brooklyn First	C. F. McKee
April 25, 1918	Green Tree	M. C. Swigart
April 24, 1919	Philadelphia Bethany	C. F. McKee
April 29, 1920	Green Tree	C. C. Ellis
April 27, 28, 1921	Pottstown First	J. S. Noffsinger
April 27, 1922	Coventry	H. S. Replogle
April 26, 1923	Germantown	M. C. Swigart
April 24, 1924	Ambler	J. S. Noffsinger
April 30, 1925	Royersford	Ross D. Murphy
April 22, 1926	Parker Ford	M. C. Swigart
April 28, 1927	Philadelphia First	H. S. Replogle
April 25, 26, 1928	Green Tree	A. M. Dixon
April 17, 18, 1929	Ambler	Ross D. Murphy
April 23, 24, 1930	Coventry	H. S. Replogle
April 22, 23, 1931	Wilmington	Trostle P. Dick
April 20, 21, 1932	Philadelphia First	H. S. Replogle
April 19, 20, 1933	Royersford	Q. A. Holsopple
April 18, 19, 1934	Geiger Memorial	Trostle P. Dick
April 17, 18, 1935	Green Tree	Earl M. Bowman
April 22, 23, 1936	Coventry	A. C. Miller
April 22, 1937	Germantown	Trostle P. Dick
April 21, 1938	Ambler	H. S. Replogle
April 20, 1939	Quakertown	J. E. Whitacre
April 17, 18, 1940	Philadelphia First	Trostle P. Dick
April 16, 17, 1941	Coventry	J. Grannum Mahon
April 22, 23, 1942	Amwell	B. F. Waltz
April 21, 22, 1943	Germantown	Nevin H. Zuck
April 19, 20, 1944	Green Tree	Trostle P. Dick
April 4, 5, 1945	Coventry	David K. Hanawalt
April 3, 4, 1946	Pottstown First	Ross D. Murphy

April 9, 10, 1947

Philadelphia First

November 12, 13, 1947	Geiger Memorial	W. A. Martin.
November 2, 3, 1948	Amwell	B. F. Waltz, assistant moderator presided
November 1, 2, 1949	Brooklyn Calvary	D. Howard Keiper
November 7, 8, 1950	Philadelphia Bethany	D. Howard Keiper
October 30, 31, 1951	Quakertown	B. F. Waltz
October 28, 29, 1952	Philadelphia First	A. S. Alderfer
October 27, 28, 1953	Royersford	Glen E. Norris
October 29, 30, 1954	Wilmington	D. Howard Keiper
October 28, 29, 1955	Coventry	B. F. Waltz
October 26, 27, 1956	Drexel Hill	Ivan C. Fetterman
October 18, 19, 1957	Ambler	A. S. Alderfer
October 17, 18, 1958	Amwell	Berkey E. Knavel
October 16, 17, 1959	Green Tree	Luke H. Brandt
October 21, 22, 1960	Philadelphia First	John S. Landis
October 20, 21, 1961	Quakertown	Donald H. Shank
October 19, 20, 1962	Paoli-Immanuel	D. Howard Keiper
October 18, 19, 1963	Wilmington	W. Dean Crouse
October 16, 17, 1964	Ambler	Wayne H. Dick
October 15, 16, 1965	Drexel Hill	Linford J. Rotenberger
October 15, 1966	Coventry	Wilbur A. Martin
October 21, 1967	Drexel Hill	George W. Landis
October 19, 1968	Ambler	Lester M. Rosenberger
October 18, 1969	Brooklyn First	Donald W. Rummel
October 10, 11, 1970	Lititz, Pennsylvania	Galen S. Young
		Ralph R. Frey
		Walter W. Eshelman

## APPENDIX II

## GERMANTOWN CHURCH CEMETERY

Many of the old family names of the eighteenth century church membership are found in the Germantown Church Cemetery. Some of the plainer markers have been effaced by weathering. In spite of this condition, a visitor may read the names of Bowman, Mack, Keyser, Van Lashet, Fox and Lehman as he walks around the grounds. Of the 1,064 graves in the burial ground, the following contain remains of former ministers of the brotherhood:

Amos Cowell. # 3. Old section.

Harriet Livermore. # 22 Old section. Buried, April, 1868.

Peter Keyser, Jr. # 31. Old section. Buried in 1819.

Alexander Mack, Sr. # 58. Old section. Moved from Axe's, October 13, 1894. Deceased, 1735.

Alexander Mack, Jr. # 58. Old section. Buried in 1803.

George Miller. # 63. Old section.  
 Henry Geiger. # 64. Old section. Buried, December 30, 1885.  
 John W. Price. # 65. Old section. Buried in 1860.  
 John Righter. # 66. Old section. Buried in 1860.  
 John Fox. # 68. Old section. Buried, July, 1880.  
 Marcus Witter. # 69. Old section. Buried in 1927.  
 Charles Hubbs. # 73. Old section.  
 Thomas Langstroth. # 80. Old section. Buried in 1800.  
 John Van Lashet. # 95. Old section. Buried in 1858.  
 Benjamin F. Waltz. # 99. Old section. Buried, November 24, 1958.  
 Reuben Hammer. # 115. Old section. Buried in 1837.  
 Jacob Spanogle. # 121. Old section. Buried in 1876.  
 William Swinden. # 143. Old section. Buried on May 27, 1911.  
 Christian Custer. # 165. Middle section. Buried, September, 1879.  
 Benjamin F. Kittinger. # 17. New section. Buried, August 4, 1913.  
 Edward Crees. # 28. New section. Buried, October 24, 1929.  
 Jacob S. Cassel. # 59. New section. Buried, August 20, 1919.  
 Louis S. Bowman. # 71. New section. Buried, November 13, 1950.  
 John L. Frey. # 76. New section. Buried, March 16, 1899.

The preamble to the by-laws of the Germantown Cemetery indicates that the grounds were shared by the Germantown and Philadelphia First congregations.

Several of the old tombstones contain quaint inscriptions, characteristic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One marker contains the lines,

“Death enters; there is no defence  
 His time there is none can tell,  
 In a moment he'll call thee hence  
 To heaven or down to hell.”

(Levi Jones, died March 25, 1827).

Elizabeth Jones, who died on October 25, 1849, had these words inscribed for her tombstone:

“While I have been here, you have been dear,  
 I've always found you kind;  
 But now by grace I quit this place  
 And leave you all behind.”

The cemetery is the last resting-place for several black people. The Philadelphia First Church, in 1840, would not accept the rules and regulations of the cemetery until the clause which restricted burials to “white persons” was removed. On November 14, 1904, Israel N. Sanders was placed in lot # 142 in the old cemetery. Lydia Robbins, a colored maid, was buried in lot # 5 of the old cemetery on December 6, 1912.

The following persons have been custodians of the cemetery since the days when the congregation established accurate record-keeping:--

John Bigger, sexton, June 26, 1898-

Milton B. Tyler, sexton, July 26, 1899-

Francis W. Price, treasurer, May 1, 1918-

John H. Groth, treasurer, August 14, 1928-  
 Warren J. Price, treasurer, January 8, 1934-  
 John H. Groth, treasurer, April 13, 1936-  
 Lowell D. Hackman, treasurer, January 13, 1963-  
 John C. Picking, treasurer, June 5, 1968-1970.  
 Kenneth Wilkenson, treasurer, 1970-  
 Donald Mason served as treasurer during Mr. Wilkenson's absence for continuing education in Utah.

### APPENDIX III

#### THE ALEXANDER MACK, SR., BIBLE

The Alexander Mack Bible, currently in possession of Bridgewater College, is a small, thick volume, 6 1/4" long, 3 1/2" wide and 2 3/4" thick. The binding is in full leather with durable wooden backs covered with calf skin. The text of the Bible is in Martin Luther's German translation with the apocryphal writings.

When Alexander Mack, Sr., died in 1735, he left his Bible in the possession of his son, Alexander Mack, Jr. After his death in 1803, the Bible became the property of the Germantown Church. Some years later, the congregation presented the Bible to Elder Philip Rothenbarger who had been an ardent admirer of the second Alexander Mack. In 1841, Rothenbarger gave the Bible to Elder Henry Kurtz. On Kurtz's death in 1874, the Bible was left with other valuables in the hands of his children. In time, the Bible came into the hands of Elder Jacob H. Kurtz, of Poland, Ohio. In the early 1900s, Bro. Kurtz donated the historic volume to Bridgewater College.

### APPENDIX IV

#### CHRISTIAN LEHMAN

One of the early Germantown Brethren, whose name appears on surveys and deeds of the Colonial period, was Christian Lehman. In the period preceding the American Revolution, he prepared nearly all the deeds for the transfer of real estate in and near Germantown. He surveyed properties, wrote wills and prepared other parchments requiring careful penmanship.

In addition to the services listed, Christian Lehman, a member of the Germantown Church, conducted a nursery at his home, where he grew fruit and ornamental trees. His tombstone describes him as a "notary public of this province."

He was actually Germantown's leading pioneer historian. He copied old drafts showing where the lands of the first settlers were located and to these drafts he added notations of importance to later investigators. In the 1740s, he was secretary of the first public library in Germantown.

Lehman (1714-1774) came to Pennsylvania in 1731 with his father

Gottfried and brother John. His mother died at Dresden in 1721. T father and two sons lived at Hermnhut, the Moravian community of Upper Prussia (1726-1731), and came to Pennsylvania by way of Hamburg, Amsterdam and Dover, England. These people came to Philadelphia on a small ship and subscribed to the oath of allegiance to Great Britain on October 14, 1731.

The father worked as a potter in Germantown and John as a shoemaker. When the father died in 1756, John bought the property and the pottery business. The marble tombstone for Gottfried Lehman was eventually placed in the Germantown Church Cemetery. Lehman descendants in 1935 removed the tombstone from the cemetery and had it attached to the wall of the passageway beside the church leading to the burial grounds.

Christian Lehman moved from Germantown to Philadelphia in 1770 and established an office at the northwest corner of Race and Third Streets. Here he continued to serve as scrivener and surveyor and operated his Germantown nursery. His death came on December 28, 1774, and he was buried in the Upper Germantown Burying-Grounds.

## APPENDIX V

### HARRIET LIVERMORE

Harriet Livermore's remains are among the honored dead of the Germantown Church Cemetery. Her story has been told repeatedly by Brethren who recited the history of the North Atlantic District.

The daughter of Edward St. Loe Livermore, U. S. Senator and Justice of the Supreme Court of New Hampshire, she had a wide variety of religious experiences in her ninety years of life (1778-1868). Freeman Ankrum (*The Gospel Messenger*, November 25, 1950) reported that she was sprinkled in infancy, confirmed in the Episcopalian Church, associated with the Congregationalists and the Society of Friends and was baptized as a Baptist.

She zealously embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent and felt that it was her duty to proclaim it to the ends of the earth. She traveled in Europe and the Middle East, living for a time on the slopes of Mount Lebanon believing that Christ would soon return to Jerusalem. When she returned to America, she became a successful evangelist. She was popularly known as "The Evangelist", "The Pilgrim Wanderer" and "The Watcher."

In August, 1826, she came to Philadelphia, where she learned about the simple faith of the German Baptist Brethren. Although many ministers regarded her with suspicion, Elder Peter Keyser, Jr., of the Philadelphia First Church, welcomed her to the Crown Street pulpit. She was permitted to conduct meetings and communed with the Brethren at their lovefeast on November 16, 1826.

At one of these memorable evangelistic meetings, Sara Righter was converted. This young lady, after her baptism, became one of the

pioneer women preachers of the denomination. She was baptized by Elder Peter Keyser, Jr., on November 12, 1826.

John Greenleaf Whittier memorialized Harriet Livermore as "The Pilgrim Stranger" in his winter idyl, "Snow Bound." One who took advantage of the Whittier household was this "woman tropical, intense in thought and act, in soul and sense."

"She sat among us, at the best,  
A not unfear'd, half-welcome guest,  
Rebuking with her cultured phrase  
Our homeliness of words and ways."

Abraham Cassel, in a letter dated September 22, 1902, described the plight of this famous woman who was disinherited because of her religious zeal. She eventually took up residence with Mrs. Margaret Worrell, a member of the Germantown Church, and some others, before she was compelled in sickness to seek an almshouse. When Harriet Livermore died on March 30, 1868, Margaret Worrell buried her in Mrs. Worrell's lot in the Germantown Church Cemetery. Today, a very plain, white marker shows the site of her resting-place.

## FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

## CHAPTER ONE

## FROM THESE ROOTS

- 1.--*Circumstantial Geographical Description of Pennsylvania*, Francis Daniel Pastorius, 1700.
- 2.--W. C. Hanawalt, fifth president of La Verne College (1869-1953), prepared a Ph.D. dissertation on the theme, *Renaissance of the Brethren*. This manuscript, which was destroyed by fire, traced some of the ideas of Alexander Mack to Gerhard Grott (1340-1384) and the Brothers of the Common Life.
- 3.--William Shakespeare's "Macbeth", Act I, Scene 3, Line 58.
- 4.--*Current History*, Victor L. Albjerg, November, 1955.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 24, 1900.
- 6.--P. 16, 17, *Rebels and Gentlemen*, Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, 1942.
- 7.--P. 15, 16, *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren in Western Pennsylvania*, 1751-1950, W. J. Hamilton, 1953.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 19, 1938.
- 9.--P. 93, *Studies in Brethren History*, Floyd E. Mallott, 1954.
- 10.--P. 28, *History of the Coventry Church of the Brethren*, 1724-1974, 1974.
- 11.--*Cultural Changes in the Church of the Brethren*, Frederick D. Dove, 1932.
- 12.--P. 153-154, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania*, C. J. Buck and E. H. Buck, 1939.
- 13.--P. 4, *Full Report of the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Brethren*, 1908.
- 14.--P. 72. *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America*, Martin G. Brumbaugh, 1899.
- 15.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 5, 1955.
- 16.--*The Gospel Mesenger*, March 6, 1948.
- 17.--*Preface, A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America*, M. G. Brumbaugh, 1899.
- 18.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Brethren*, 1916.
- 19.--Among other works of J. G. Francis are the following: "The Church of the Brethren in Lebanon County" (1916); *Some Francis History: Colonial and Revolutionary With Respect to the Present* (1936); *The Francis Homeland and a Bird's Eye View of the Family* (1936); "The Union Canal" (1939); "The Kreider Family of Lebanon County"; "The Royer Family in America" and "The Eiseberg Family."
- 20.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 12, 1930.
- 21.--The Franconia Cemetery in Montgomery County is the site of the burial of Christopher Sower, Jr., and his son David Sower. The

Harley meetinghouse burial grounds contain many members of the Harley family and the Klein meetinghouse burial grounds contain the remains of Peter Becker and Abraham H. Cassel.

- 22.--*Full Report of the Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren*, 1918.
- 23.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1918.
- 24.--*Annual Conference Minutes*, 1957.
- 25.--In 1910, the population of New York City was 4,776,883 and that of Philadelphia was 1,549,008.
- 26.--P. 69, *Studies in Brethren History*, Floyd E. Mallott, 1954.
- 27.--See chapter on "The Philadelphia First Church" 1943.
- 28.--P. 193f, *The History Of A Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 29.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 8, 1901.
- 30.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 31.--P. 144, *Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 32.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 25, 1939.
- 33.--P. 27, *The Eternal Now*, Paul Tillich, 1963.

## FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES CHAPTER TWO

### ORIGINS OF AN INDEPENDENT DISTRICT

- 1.--*Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren*, 1876.
- 2.--ibid, 1876.
- 3.--Throughout all of this book the name North Atlantic District is used to designate the original Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York.
- 4.--Letter to the editor from Ralph W. Schlosser, November 21, 1973.
- 5.--P. 317, *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren*, 1876.
- 6.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 7.--*The Primitive Christian*, April 11, 1882.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 14, 1900.
- 9.--*Report to the Annual Meeting*, 1902.
- 10.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 11.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 12.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 13.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Church of the Brethren*, 1911.
- 14.--*The Primitive Christian*, January 22, 1882.
- 15.--From a letter to the editor by Graybill Hershey, November 5, 1973.
- 16.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 17.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 18.--P. 113, *The History Of A Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 19.--P. 8, *Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.
- 20.--*Minutes of the Special District Meeting*, Eastern District, Septem-

ber 21, 1910.

21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 20, 1911.

22.--P. 178, *Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1910.

23.--From the second Amendment to the Charter of The Brethren Home of Neffsville, Pennsylvania.

24.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 3, 1912.

## FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

### CHAPTER THREE

#### \* THE FIRST GREAT WORK OF THE CHURCH

- 1.--P. 255f, *This Freedom Whence?* J. Wesley Bready, 1942. See also P. 167, *Protestant Christianity*, John Dillenberger, 1954.
- 2.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 7, 1931.
- 3.--P. 23, *Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1915.
- 4.--P. 196, *The Adventurous Future*, Paul H. Bowman, Sr., 1959.
- 5.--*Yearbook of the Church of the Brethren*, 1923.
- 6.--*Full Report of the Annual Conference*, 1902.
- 7.--P. 24, *Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1915.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 18, 1942.
- 9.--P. 33, *Brethren's Family Almanac*, 1898.
- 10.--P. 10, *Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1906.
- 11.--*Diary of Wilbur B. Stover*, October 13, 1892.
- 12.--P. 41, *Report of the Proceedings of the Brethren's Annual Meeting*, 1902.
- 13.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 25, 1912.
- 14.--P. 8, *The Church of the Brethren*, Roland L. Howe, 1948.
- 15.--*Revised Minutes of the Annual Meeting, 1778-1922*, 1922.
- 16.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 25, 1920.
- 17.--*The Missionary Visitor*, June, 1930.
- 18.--Letter to Elmer Q. Gleim from Esther E. Kreps, October, 1974.
- 19.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 10, 1945.
- 20.--P. 12, *Minutes of the Annual Conference*, June, 1920.
- 21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 18, 1920.
- 22.--*The Missionary Visitor*, June, 1930.
- 23.--P. 68, *History of the Coventry Church of the Brethren*, 1724-1974.
- 24.--The word "ecumenical" is used to describe the trend away from provincialism and parochialism among the churches to greater co-operation and understanding between the various religious groups of the world.
- 25.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 27, 1931.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE DISTRICT AND ITS SERVICE MINISTRIES

- 1.--P. 6, *The Gospel Messenger*, August 7, 1943.
- 2.--*Brethren Life and Thought*, "Will The Brethren Prevail?" Donald F. Durnbaugh, Winter, 1965.
- 3.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1902.
- 4.--P. 23, *History of the Coventry Church of the Brethren*, 1724-1974.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 24, 1938.
- 6.--P. 587, *In The Days of McKinley*, Margaret Leech, 1959.
- 7.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1908.
- 8.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1916.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 1, 1924.
- 10.--*Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1917.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 8, 1919.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 23, 1924.
- 13.--P. 8, *The Gospel Messenger*, November 18, 1933.
- 14.--P. 133, *Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, Conference of 1840, 1899.
- 15.--P. 3, *Minutes of the Special Annual Conference*, Goshen, Indiana, 1918.
- 16.--Pp. 9-13, *Minutes of the Annual Conference*, June, 1924.
- 17.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 5, 1916.
- 18.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 3, 1924.
- 19.--P.2, *Minutes of the Special General Conference*, Goshen, Indiana, 1918.
- 20.--P. 3, *Minutes of the Special General Conference*, Goshen, Indiana, 1918.
- 21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 3, 1920.
- 22.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 27, 1929.
- 23.--*Survey Graphic*, "Children of the Spanish War", Ann Louise Armstrong, September, 1937.
- 24.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 8, 1939.
- 25.--*Minutes of the District Conference*, Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York, 1944.
- 26.--*The Gospel Messenger*, "The Church in War Time", October 25, 1947. A report for the General Conference of Mennonites in 1953 showed that 55 per cent of the drafted men went into the Army, 27 per cent went into Civilian Public Service work and 18 per cent into noncombatant duties. Churches were remiss in educating for alternative programs.
- 27.--Cited from a letter to Elmer Q. Gleim by Leona Z. Row, February 16, 1974.
- 28.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 11, 1941.
- 29.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 18, 1945.

- 30.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 20, 1954.
- 31.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 5, 1946.
- 32.--*Annual Conference Minutes*, 1944.
- 33.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 1, 1942.
- 34.--P. 145, *The Adventurous Future*, Paul H. Bowman Sr., 1959.
- 35.--P. 70, 71, *The Adventurous Future*, Paul H. Bowman Sr., 1959.
- 36.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 13, 1947.

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#### THE CHURCH CONFRONTS CHANGE

- 1.--"Echoes of 1916", a pamphlet by D. H. Lepley.
- 2.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 29, 1938.
- 3.--P. 1316, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol. iii., Thomas Scharf and Thompson Wescott, 1889.
- 4.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 6, 1943.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 6, 1912.
- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 2, 1933.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 20, 1943.
- 8.--By 1952, the Church of the Brethren granted women equal rights with men in the ministry. Permission was granted in this year for the ordination of women.
- 9.--P. 63, *The History of a Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 10.--P. 67, *The History of a Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 5, 1938.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 6, 1935.
- 13.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 20, 1963.
- 14.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 23, 1934.
- 15.--*Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings, 1778-1922*, 1923.
- 16.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1921.
- 17.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 5, 1906.
- 18.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 23, 1915.
- 19.--*Minutes of the District Board, North Atlantic District*, September 16, 1961.
- 20.--P. 389, *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren*, 1908.
- 21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 13, 1921.
- 22.--P. 247-248, *Progressive Religious Thought*, John W. Buckham, 1919.
- 23.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 8, 1919.
- 24.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 8, 1901.
- 25.--"Echoes of 1916", A pamphlet by D. H. Lepley.
- 26.--"Echoes of 1916", A pamphlet by D. H. Lepley.

27.--P. 7, *Minutes of the Annual Conference*, 1933.

28.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 6, 1935.

29.--*Minutes of the District Conference*, North Atlantic District, April 17, 1941.

30.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 11, 1933.

31.--The fundamentals adopted by the District Elders and the District Conference were: 1).--The divine authority and the full and complete inspiration of the whole of the Old and New Testament Scriptures; 2).--The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; 3).--The doctrine of the Trinity; 4).--The fall of man and his consequent depravity and the necessity of the new birth; 5).--The sinless life of Jesus Christ, atonement in His blood, which was shed for sin, and His personal resurrection; 6).--Justification by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; 7).--Regeneration by the Holy Spirit; 8).--The personality of the Holy Spirit, and as the Divine Paraclete, the Comforter and Guide of all the people of God; 9).--Sanctification through the Word and the Spirit; and 10).--The personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment.

32.--*Current History*, "Blue Laws in America", March, 1921.

33.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 20, 1917.

34.--*Current History*, April, 1923.

35.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 14, 1934.

36.--*The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, January, 1970. Millenarianism is belief in the personal, imminent return of Christ to earth. Literalism refers to the verbal, inerrant inspiration of the Bible.

37.--P. 82-83, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Church of the Brethren*, 1923-1944, 1946.

38.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 7, 1930.

39.--*Brethren Revival Fellowship Witness*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1972.

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#### THE DISTRICT AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 20, 1898.

2.--P. 1316, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol. iii., Scharff and Wescott, 1884.

3.--*Christian Family Companion*, Volume 3, 1867.

4.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 2, 1933.

5.--*Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 1778-1922, 1923.

6.--P. 256f., *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren*, 1908.

7.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1912.

- 8.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1912.
- 9.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1913.
- 10.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1897.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 26, 1917.
- 12.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1912.
- 13.--*Current History*, April, 1937.
- 14.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 6, 1943.
- 15.--*Minutes of the District Meeting*, April 20, 1944.
- 16.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 22, 1900.
- 17.--*Full Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1914.
- 18.--From a mimeographed copy of the dedicatory message, "To Build Again", by Vernard Eller, May 15, 1955.
- 19.--The First Church of the Brethren of Reading, Pennsylvania, baptized its membership classes at the site in 1973 on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the first baptisms in America.
- 20.--Noted in a letter to Elmer Q. Gleim from John D. Keiper, October 18, 1973.
- 21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 8, 1939.
- 22.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 31, 1941.
- 23.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 28, 1935.
- 24.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 8, 1939.
- 25.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 1, 1933.
- 26.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 13, 1931.
- 27.--*Women's Council Minutes*, North Atlantic District, April 17, 1935.  
Found in Elizabethtown College Library.
- 28.--*The Survey*, "What's Wrong With The Church?" Charles Stelzle, October, 1933.
- 29.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 16, 1927.
- 30.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 28, 1935.
- 31.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1926.
- 32.--There are unconfirmed stories that when Mary S. Geiger visited Elizabethtown College before her death, she was criticized for the type of prayer veil she wore. Elizabethtown College received no contributions from her because of the criticism.
- 33.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 1, 1944.

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### CHAPTER SEVEN

#### THE REUNITED DISTRICT

- 1.--P. 9, *The Gospel Messenger*, March 18, 1950.
- 2.--Philadelphia was a city of numerous hate groups in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1940, it had five branches of the Ku Klux Klan with 10,000 members.
- 3.--P. 15, *Minutes of the 171st Recorded Annual Conference*, 1957.

4.--From a mimeographed copy of "The Church of the Brethren As I See It", by Norman J. Baugher, delivered on October 21, 1967 at the Drexel Hill Church of the Brethren.

5.--P. 57, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences*, 1923-1944, 1946.

6.--P. 3, *The Gospel Messenger*, May 21, 1949.

7.--*Minutes of the Annual Conference*, 1960.

8.--*North Atlantic District Board Minutes*, March 11, 1963.

9.--*District Conference Minutes*, North Atlantic District, 1966.

10.--The Committees appointed to the tasks were: *Goals and Program*: C. Wayne Zunkel, A. G. Breidenstine, F. S. Carper, W. Dean Crouse, Larry Graybill, Graybill Hershey, John R. E. Hoover, Wilbur A. Martin, Mrs. George Mayer, Galen S. Young, Nevin H. Zuck. *Budget and Finance*: Stanley L. Davis Sr., W. Harold Bealer, K. Ezra Bucher, G. Roy Dilling, Hiram J. Frysinger, Norman E. Keller and Earl H. Kurtz. *Organization*: Luke H. Brandt, Franklin Cassel, Clifford B. Huffman, John Kreps, Albert Richwine, Lester Rosenberger, W. Clemens Rosenberger, and Mrs. Charles Weaver. *Legal*: Robert O. Hess, Neil Detwiler, Wayne H. Dick, John Gibbel, Galen C. Kilhefner.

11.--*Messenger*, January 1, 1971.

12.--From notes of the message delivered by Harold Z. Bomberger, "This We Bring", delivered on October 11, 1970.

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### CHAPTER EIGHT

#### THE GERMANTOWN CHURCH

1.--Accounts state that when the Germans first settled in Germantown, they called it Krefeld. Mount Airy was called Cresheim and Chestnut Hill was called Summerhousen. "Outsiders" referred to the general area as Germantown Township and later, Germantown.

2.--Cited in *The German and Swiss Settlements of Colonial Pennsylvania*, Oscar Kuhns, 1900.

3.--P. 38, *Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill*, S. F. Hutchkin, 1889.

4.--P. 2305-06, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol iii, Thomas Scharf and Thompson Wescott, 1884.

5.--*Full Report of the Proceedings of Annual Conference*, 1905.

6.--P. 61, *The Brethren in Colonial America*, Donald F. Durnbaugh, 1967.

7.--P. 397, *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, Vol i., H. M. J. Klein, 1924.

8.--*The Brethren in Colonial America*, Donald F. Durnbaugh, 1967.

- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, "The Brethren Face Adversity", February 17, 1951.
- 10.--P. 342, *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren*, 1876.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 22, 1891.
- 12.--P. 111f, *The History of a Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 13.--P. 92, *History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, 1915.
- 14.--P. 1315, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol. ii., Thomas Scharf and Thompson Wescott, 1884.
- 15.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Brethren*, 1896.
- 16.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1900.
- 17.--This story is ably told in R. W. Schlosser's *History of Elizabethtown College, 1899-1970*.
- 18.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 17, 1915.
- 19.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 28, 1911.
- 20.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 19, 1927.
- 21.--Although the membership for 1924 was listed at 404 persons, these were widely scattered. Only 212 of this enrollment were regular in attendance at the church services.
- 22.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 13, 1915.
- 23.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 1, 1911.
- 24.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 9, 1938.
- 25.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 27, 1940.
- 26.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 8, 1941.
- 27.--P. 124, *Report of the Proceedings of the Brethren's Annual Meeting*, 1896.
- 28.--*Yearbook of the Church of the Brethren*, 1925.
- 29.--*Minutes of the Annual Conference*, 1943.
- 30.--P. 7, *Minutes of the Thirty-Ninth District Conference*, South-eastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Eastern New York and Northern Delaware, 1949.
- 31.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 29, 1946.
- 32.--Nevin H. Zuck address, November 24, 1958.
- 33.--*Messenger*, June 24, 1965. Study made in January, 1965 by Thomas Wilson and Lee G. Whipple.
- 34.--*District Board Minutes*, North Atlantic District, May 21, 1963.
- 35.--*Messenger*, "Germantown in Search of New Patterns", June 24, 1965.
- 36.--Declaration of Trust, December 6, 1942.
- 37.--Report of "The Germantown Ministry" to the 1967 District Conference, North Atlantic District.

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## THE COVENTRY CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

- 1.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 1, 1924.
- 2.--P. 65, *The Brethren in Colonial America*, Donald F. Durnbaugh, 1967.
- 3.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 1, 1924.
- 4.--Julius F. Sachse, *The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania*, 1899-1900.
- 5.--When some Indians were baptized by sprinkling and the Brethren became aware of the movement toward a non-denominational Christianity, they decided to promote denominational awareness by conducting their own Annual Meetings. Chpt. XII. *Lest We Forget*, Rolland F. Flovy, 1973.
- 6.--From the will of Martin Urner, Jr., as recorded in West Chester, Pennsylvania.
- 7.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Brethren*, 1876.
- 8.--*Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Brethren*, 1876.
- 9.--"Our Living Church", a printed record of the Coventry Church of the Brethren, 1963.
- 10.--*The Gospel Visitor*, 1857.
- 11.--*The Gospel Visitor*, 1858.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 18, 1914.
- 13.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 21, 1914.
- 14.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 29, 1915.
- 15.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 17, 1915.
- 16.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 10, 1916.
- 17.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 10, 1919.
- 18.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 24, 1926.
- 19.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 14, 1950.
- 20.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 12, 1964.

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## THE AMWELL CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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- 2.--P. 196, *The Brethren in Colonial America*, Donald F. Durnbaugh, 1967.
- 3.--From the Herbert Harley compilation of the Amwell Church.
- 4.--P. 170, *History of the Church of the Brethren of Eastern Pennsylvania*, 1915.

- 5.--From the Herbert Harley compilation of the Amwell Church.
- 6.--*The Gospel Visitor*, "Our Late Journey To The East", February, 1857.
- 7.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, October 26, 1882.
- 8.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, February 28, 1883.
- 9.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, March 8, 1884.
- 10.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, March 7, 1885.
- 11.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, September 8, 1885.
- 12.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, March 13, 1886.
- 13.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, September 14, 1890.
- 14.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, October 10, 1893.
- 15.--*The Amwell Church Minutes*, December 7, 1895.
- 16.--From the Herbert Harley compilation of the Amwell Church. Printed in the Hunterdon County, New Jersey, newspaper in February, 1896.
- 17.--*Amwell Church Minutes*, December 17, 1898.
- 18.--*Amwell Church Minutes*, March 5, 1904.
- 19.--P. 264f, *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren*, 1908.
- 20.--Herbert Harley compilation of the Amwell Church.
- 21.--*District Conference Report*, Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Eastern New York, April 28, 1927.
- 22.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 8, 1930.
- 23.--*Newark Evening News*, September 9, 1933.
- 24.--*Hunterdon County Democrat*, August 31, 1933.
- 25.--*District Meeting Minutes*, October 29-30, 1954.

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- 2.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 2, 1933.
- 3.--P. 81, *The History of a Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 4.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 23, 1938.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 14, 1933.
- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 7, 1933.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 26, 1938.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 14, 1933.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 26, 1932.
- 10.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 14, 1933.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 22, 1902.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 17, 1903.
- 13.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 5, 1927.

- 14.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 1, 1934.
- 15.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 1, 1911.
- 16.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 4, 1911.
- 17.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 13, 1912.
- 18.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 3, 1914.
- 19.--*The History Of A Church*, Roland L. Howe, 1943.
- 20.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 17, 1914.
- 21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 28, 1914.
- 22.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 1, 1915.
- 23.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 4, 1931.
- 24.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 10, 1936.
- 25.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 26, 1913.
- 26.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 4, 1916.
- 27.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 1, 1918.
- 28.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 18, 1918.
- 29.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 27, 1915.
- 30.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 16, 1918.
- 31.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 4, 1947.
- 32.--*Messenger*, February, 1973.
- 33.--P. 25, "The Church of the Brethren", a pamphlet by Roland L. Howe, 1948.
- 34.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 24, 1923.
- 35.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 26, 1924.
- 36.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 13, 1926.
- 37.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 13, 1926.
- 38.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 26, 1930.
- 39.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 3, 1930.
- 40.--A statement by Ralph E. Kreps concerning Bro. Brumbaugh.
- 41.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 11, 1930.
- 42.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 12, 1948.
- 43.--Letter from Charles E. Zunkel to D. Alfred Replogle, July 9, 1953.
- 44.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 6, 1962.

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#### AMBLER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

- 1.--P. 595, *History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, 1915.
- 2.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 8, 1901.
- 3.--P. 17, *Brethren Family Almanac*, 1905.
- 4.--*History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, 1915.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 17, 1938.

- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 29, 1922.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 1, 1930.
- 8.--The date of the tribute was July 29, 1932.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 23, 1935.
- 10.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 12, 1938.
- 11.--From a letter to the editor by Paul M. Robinson, dated September 27, 1973.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 27, 1945.

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#### PARKER FORD CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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- 3.--"The Church of the Brethren", a pamphlet by Roland L. Howe, 1948.
- 4.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 9, 1912.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 4, 1913.
- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 16, 1915.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 27, 1917.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 29, 1918.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 24, 1920.
- 10.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 28, 1931.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 26, 1931.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 12, 1951.

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#### THE HARMONYVILLE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

- 1.--Pp. 217-218, *History of the Church of the Brethren of Eastern Pennsylvania*, 1915.
- 2.--From the "Historical Record" of Harmonyville Church.
- 3.--From a paper supplied to the editor by Mr. and Mrs. John C. Kolle.
- 4.--*Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings, 1778-1922*, 1922.
- 5.--"One Hundred Years of Preaching At Harmonyville", W. G. Nyce, 1945.
- 6.--From notes collected by Rev. and Mrs. John C. Kolle.

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- 2.--*The Gospel Visitor*, February, 1857.
- 3.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 19, 1917.
- 4.--*District Meeting Minutes*, April 28, 1921.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 28, 1934.
- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 24, 1936.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 20, 1924.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 13, 1926.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, "Echoes of Washington and Rittenhouse", J. G. Francis, April 13, 1935.
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- 2.--P. 275-276, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren*, M. G. Brumbaugh, 1899.
- 3.--"A Brief History of the Springfield Church of the Brethren," a pamphlet by Miriam K. Steely, 1966.
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- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 27, 1920.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 6, 1921.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 15, 1921.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 24, 1939.
- 10.--*The Gospel Messenger*, January 27, 1945.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 22, 1945.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 28, 1956.

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- 2.--P. 9, "Royersford, Church of the Brethren", Anniversary booklet, 1968.
- 3.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 29, 1900.
- 4.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 3, 1912.
- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, May 9, 1914.
- 6.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 11, 1922.
- 7.--*The Gospel Messenger*, February 14, 1925.
- 8.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 18, 1931.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 21, 1939.
- 10.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 26, 1942.
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- 2.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 5, 1938.
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- 5.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 29, 1911.
- 6.--"The Church of the Brethren", a booklet by Roland L. Howe, 1948
- 7.--*Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1913.
- 8.--*Report of the Annual Meeting*, 1913.
- 9.--*The Gospel Messenger*, October 17, 1914.
- 10.--*The Gospel Messenger*, November 10, 1917.
- 11.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 27, 1918.
- 12.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 3, 1928.
- 13.--*The Gospel Messenger*, April 13, 1929.
- 14.--*The Gospel Messenger*, December 7, 1929.
- 15.--Standing Committee Report. June 14, 1932. Paper in hands of Elmer Q. Gleim as prepared and given to him by Roland L. Howe.

- 16.--*The Gospel Messenger*, June 25, 1938.
- 17.--*Elders' Body Minutes of Southeastern District of Pennsylvania*, February 11, 1956.
- 18.--*Minutes of the North Atlantic District Board*, September 14, 1965.

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- 2.--*The Gospel Messenger*, September 15, 1900.
- 3.--*Minutes* of the Norristown Church of the Brethren.
- 4.--*Special Council Minutes*, Norristown Church, February 3, 1902.
- 5.--*Church Council Meeting Minutes*, Norristown, April 4, 1902.
- 6.--*Church Council Meeting Minutes*, Norristown, June 20, 1903.
- 7.--*Church Council Meeting Minutes*, Norristown, April 17, 1907.
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- 10.--*Church Council Meeting Minutes*, Norristown, March 5, 1912.
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- 12.--*Church Council Meeting Minutes*, Norristown, March 4, 1913.
- 13.--*The Gospel Messenger*, July 17, 1915.
- 14.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 3, 1917.
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- 16.--*Revised Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the German Baptist Brethren*, 1899.
- 17.--*The Gospel Messenger*, August 13, 1921.
- 18.--*Official Board Minutes*, Norristown Church, October 30, 1921.
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- 20.--*Norristown Times Herald*, October 3, 1936.
- 21.--*The Gospel Messenger*, March 9, 1940.
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# OLD SECTION WESTERN HALF

← WEST      EAST →

1 Mary Stadyger	2 Catherine Evans	3 Amos Cowell	4 Joseph Skeetz	5 Clemens	6 John Slingluff	7 J. Roberts	8 B. Lehman	9 R. K. Gorgas	10 J. M. Thomas
21 James Lynd	22 Margaret Warrell	23 Sarah Smith	24 Joseph Thomas	25 Joseph Jones	26 William Jungluff	27 James Kirk	28 P. Longstroth	29 Joseph Gorges	30 K. A. Smith
41 Deborah Coperthwaite	42 J. Muriel French	43 Joseph Price	44 Jacob Reiff	45 T. Banger	46 M. Knorr	47 William Keyser	48 C. J. Langstroth	49 Peter Leibert	50 G. Gorges Jr.
61 Daniel Epier	62 C. M. Benson	63 George Miller	64 Henry Geiger	65 John Price	66 G. Gorges	67 H. Kugard	68 John Fox	69 John Leibert	70 W. H. Wayne

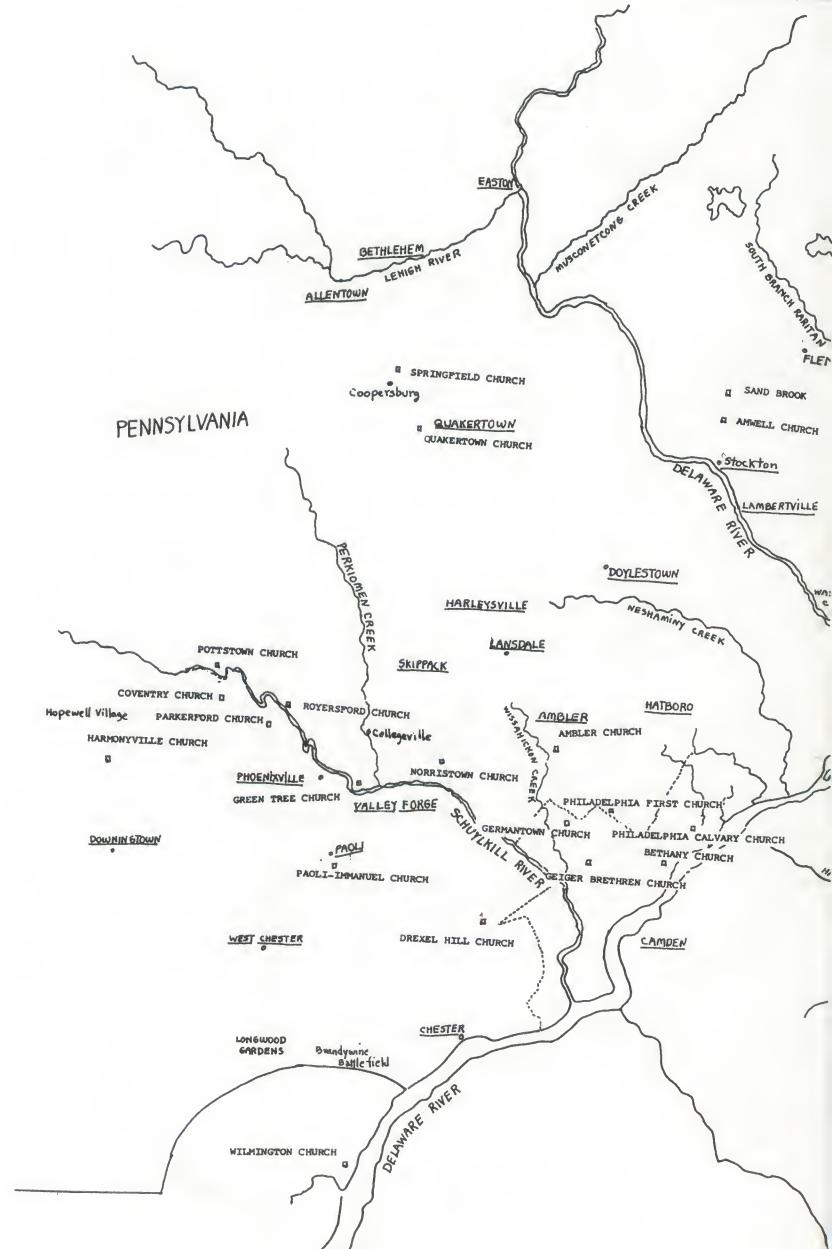
81 Isachar Hammer	82 F. Bachus	83 H. Hammer	84 John McCullen	85 James Sutton	86 Julie Hammer	87 Thomas Fry	88 H. R. Paul	89 Edwin Frick	90 T. Hagey
101 Hammer	102 Catherine Shewell	103 O. C. Paul	104 Joseph Mars	105 Robt. Neff	106 John Goodyear	107 Samuel Ambers	108 H. C. Paul	109 Sylvester Keyser	110 A. Fulton
121 Spanagle	122 John Five	123 O. W. Neff	124 Wolbert	125	126	127	128 John Banks	129 John Rittenhouse	130 Nathan Keyser
141 Spanagle	142 Roe	143 Gativals	144 Houston	145 Neffield	146 Charles Ulrich	147 H. J. Hoffner	148 McIlhenny	149	150 Hauerstick

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	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
W. L. Keyser	Geyer	Rubicam	G. Gorgas	R. Gorgas	Lorain	D. Keyser	M. Keyser	J. Bouman	Pastorius	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
Peter Lehnolt	John Jones	Sharrock	Libert	Dull	Sarah Kirk	Liebert	Ge. Clemens	D. Pastorius		
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	
E. W. Keyser	Samuel Lynd	E. Mitchel	R. Potts	Simpson	Fox	A. Mack	Thomas Keyser	Wm. Heiser		
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	
P. A. Keyser	J. E. Hubbs	J. E. Hubbs	Wm. Bowman	Zellers	John Gorgas	Joseph Gorgas	J. Lehman	J. Langstroth		

	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Wm. Fry	E. Harley	S. French	Slingoff	Vanleskette	George Ulrich	Berry	Wm. Lehman	Waltz	Langstroth	
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Hausberger Williamson	Knorr	Menlich	Hong	Ogborn	Amada Thomas	Hamilton	c. Thomas	Thacker		

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26 H. Skugard	27 Vandergrift	28 E. Crees	29 J. Lynd	30 Mayne Wolbert
37 F.W. Price	38 F.W. Price	39 Reiff	40 Supplier Wise	31 Lenniss
				32 Tridge

8 Maurice Hammer	9 G. W. Peabody	10 F. Myers	11 J. Bigger
17 E. Repert Kittinger	18 G. W. Boitel	19 I. D. Irisson	21 Pfautz
28 E. Crees	29 J. Lynd	20 C. Roberts Jolly	22 J.W. Mears Atherton
39 Reiff	40 Supplier Wise	30 Mayne Wolbert	33 Gorgas
		31 Lenniss	

52 A.T. Ridway	53 W.G. Fox	54 Geo. Pierie	55 Comer
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60 M.B. Tyler	62 A. Hudack	63 K.J. Clinton	66 Comer
61 E. Scott	71 C.W. Stevens	74 C. Unruh	75 C. Unruh
70 J. Martin Jr. Herfoot	72 L.E. Bauman	76 J.D. Fry	77 Rittenhouse
81	82 A.B. Smith	84 J. Markley	85 L.L. Hill
			87 Comer

88 Gorgas